

ROCHESTER RESEARCH ROUNDUP

PARENT TRAINING FOR FEEDING PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Conducted at University of Rochester, University of Florida, and University of Pittsburgh

WHAT did you study?

Researchers studied a parent training program to help with feeding and mealtime problems that are common for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Parent training:

A type of intervention where **caregivers meet one-on-one with a therapist to learn strategies to use with their child**, which is different from therapy where a therapist works directly with a child. This approach may help support a child with different learning needs or high levels of problem behavior.

Feeding problems:

Being extra picky about food, such as food type, food textures, or food presentation (e.g., how food is cut up, how food is placed on a dish, what dish a food/drink is served in)

Mealtime behavior problems:

Refusing to eat, not sitting at the table, tantrums, hitting, swiping things off the table

WHAT did you find?

- **Caregivers found this intervention acceptable** to address their child's feeding challenges **and were satisfied with the program**
- The study showed that parent training was able to be completed, **improved feeding outcomes**, and **decreased problem behavior at mealtime**

94%
of parents would recommend this program to others

WHY does it matter?

- Some children with ASD have feeding and mealtime behaviors that can be challenging
- **Caregivers can use strategies learned through this parent training program to support their child's feeding and mealtime behavior at home**

HOW did you study it?

- The study compared two groups: caregivers receiving parent training now and caregivers waiting to receive parent training in the future.
- **Parent training sessions** occurred over 5 months and included 11 one-on-one sessions with a trained therapist, a home visit, and up to three coaching sessions. It also included a nutritional counseling session.
- During sessions, the **caregiver and therapist discussed behavior strategies**, such as preventing problem behaviors and teaching new mealtime skills.
- Before, during, and after the parent training sessions, the **study team asked caregivers to report back about their stress, their child's feeding challenges, and if they felt the intervention was helpful and easy to do.**



What's next?

- **Repeat this program** with more caregivers, including those from more diverse backgrounds, to confirm this parent training model works for everyone.
- **Explore other options** to deliver parent training, like video conferencing or Telehealth, which may make it easier for families to participate.



THE FULL ARTICLE CAN BE FOUND THROUGH THE FOLLOWING CITATION:

Johnson, C. R., Brown, K., Hyman, S. L., Brooks, M. M., Aponte, C., Levato, L., Schmidt, B., Evans, V., Huo, Z., Bendixen, R., Eng, H., Sax, T., & Smith, T. (2018). Parent training for feeding problems in children with autism spectrum disorder: Initial randomized trial. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 44(2), 164–175. <https://doi-org.ezp.lib.rochester.edu/10.1093/jpepsy/jsy063>

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