



## Red Flags: Sensory Development

One or more of these items **seen in a pattern over several mealtimes** may be a Red Flag for concerns in the area of sensory development in young children with visual impairment. Always consider **consistency** and **impact** on the mealtime.

### Developmental Differences:

- Avoids putting objects near or in the mouth (especially when developmentally appropriate)
- Does not progress to solid foods within developmentally appropriate timelines

### Mealtime Environments:

- Not being able to enter a room with food smells
- Refuses to come to the table, stay sitting at the table, or remain with the family at mealtimes
- Cannot eat unless music is playing, TV is on, or it is completely silent
- Cannot eat unless the child has a favorite toy
- Will not touch food with hands (Needs a dipper or utensil)
- Taking an extended amount of time to eat (30-45 minutes)

### Interactions with Food:

- Diet consists of a limited variety of foods or avoids certain textured foods
- Overly sensitive sense of taste or smell
- Reactions to spicy foods are either extreme or diminished
- Excessive gagging, coughing, retching, or vomiting that interferes with eating or nutrition
- Persistent food refusal
- Holding or storing food in cheeks or under tongue interfering with food intake

### Mealtime Behaviors:

- Consistent power struggles during meals, making mealtimes unpleasant and stress-filled
- Increased behavior problems at mealtime (spits out food, throws plate)
- Resists having face washed (more so than most children)

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