

Therapeutic Hints for the DuoSpoon

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The **DuoSpoon** was created to support treatment for children with oral sensory and motor challenges. It is used as an oral sensory exploration tool, as a dipper, or as a tool for facilitation of specific oral motor responses. It is not intended for independent feeding. It is another option on the continuum of therapeutic options in the treatment of children who have eating challenges.

As an oral exploration tool! Many children are challenged by some of the sensory aspects of mealtimes and have grown worried or very cautious about spoons, textures and the presentation of foods. The **DuoSpoon** provides unique flexibility that allows friendly oral exploration. Children can gently chew, lick, suck and play with this exploration tool which has a texture more similar to a familiar toy than a traditional firm spoon. The "sensation bumps" and the "speed bumps" provide unique sensory experiences as the child explores the **DuoSpoon** right side up, sideways, or upside down! The lips and the tongue can each become friendly with the texture differences. Many children will be more comfortable with the **Duospoon**, or any therapeutic tool, if allowed the opportunity to explore it independently before adults present it with therapeutic intention.

As a dipper! Once a child is comfortable exploring the sensory aspects of the **DuoSpoon**, it can be used as a dipper to present new food tastes. When the child has demonstrated a comfort level and an interest in the **DuoSpoon**, adults can offer flavors or texture tastes. Some children initially feel safe with only a flavor added...without texture ...and others are comfortable with tiny tastes of a puree. Flavors can be offered by dipping the tool in a liquid such as juice or broth, rubbing it on a food such as meats, cooked veggies or fruits, or by using flavor drops or sprays. Gradually, puree tastes can be offered in tiny amounts and, with confidence, larger amounts. The **DuoSpoon** can then become the dipper for offering repeated puree tastes. The familiar puree offered on "sensation bumps" or "speed bumps" turns the simple puree into a texture experience. For those children who are very cautious, the **DuoSpoon** can become a bridge to food texture transitions.

For facilitation of oral motor responses! In addition to the sensory exploration and confidence building opportunities it provides, the **DuoSpoon** can also be used to facilitate specific oral motor responses. The speed bump end was designed specifically to inspire increased upper lip stimulation as the child removes food from the spoon. Many children require assistance to remove food from a spoon as the adult tips a spoon upward and scrapes the food off the upper lip. We would like children to learn to use the upper lip actively in food removal instead of this scraping approach. Typically, they learn to more actively bring lips together as the spoon is removed and gradually the central upper lip becomes more skilled at moving down and then forward to remove food from the spoon and from deeper bowls. Many children need to learn to be more active with their upper lip. The speed bump end of the **DuoSpoon** provides gentle "wake up" stimulation as the upper lip is drawn across the bowl. We can vary the upper lip experiences and requirements for the child by moving from single purees to more resistive foods such as cream cheese textured foods. It is a very different upper lip experience to remove baby food applesauce than it is to remove cream cheese from the speed bump end! Some children also benefit from the addition of crumbs on the puree or resistive food to increase the sensory information of the activity.

Remember that:

The **DuoSpoon** is intended to be used with adult supervision.

The **DuoSpoon** is latex free, FDA approved silicone.

The **DuoSpoon** should be washed with hot water and mild soap before each use.

The **DuoSpoon** should be discarded and placed with any signs of wear.

The **DuoSpoon** is NOT intended as an unsupervised chew toy. With supervision, it can be explored orally as a playful mouth exploration tool.

And...the **DuoSpoon** is NOT intended as an independent feeding tool as its flexibility, which is an asset for the above activities, will be a detriment in serious self feeding. It works for dipping, but when the child is comfortable with more heavy and textured foods, she graduates from the DuoSpoon to a more independent feeding option.

Please give us feedback about your experiences with the **DuoSpoon!**

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