

Comparison of responsive feeding practices in child care and home environments in Nova Scotia

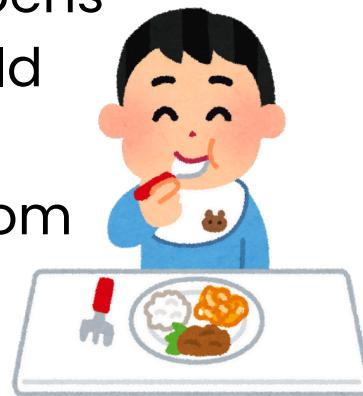
Jessie-Lee D McIsaac, Brenna Richard, Joan Turner & Melissa D Rossiter

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Background

Previous research has explored how responsive feeding happens in the family home and in child care, but not much is known about how the information from each environment interacts.



The purpose of this study was to compare responsive feeding practices in child care and home environments in NS through the framework of the 2019 CFG healthy eating recommendations.



Methods

Two online surveys were shared with child care centres (253 responses) and the families of children in their care (603 responses) in 2019 and 2020. These surveys asked questions about healthy eating and responsive feeding practices.

Question Topics

- Eating a variety of food each day
- Being mindful of eating habits
- Eating meals with others
- Involvement in food prep
- Food as part of celebration

Key Findings

Variety of Foods

Families were slightly more likely to offer a variety of foods and offer multiple chances to taste new food compared to child care settings.



Mindfulness

Families were more likely to say that they asked children if they were full, and to ask if they were still hungry.

Meals with others

Child care centres were more likely to sit with children while they ate, but there was no difference between families with how often they ate the same food as the child.



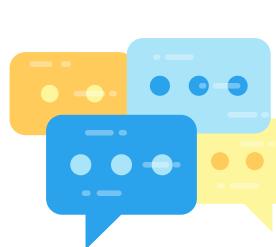
Child care centres often spoke about considerations related to health and safety regulations or having a cook to prepare food

Conclusions

Supportive Relationships

It is important that both the home environment and the child care environment work together to support children's self-regulation and to build healthy relationships with food.

Consistent communication



Receiving similar messages from child care and home environments can support children's relationships with food.

Different Realities

Both environments may have different financial constraints and priorities during meal time.