QUESTIONS ABOUT FOOD PATTERNS AND FEEDING SKILLS

The following questions are often useful for eliciting information about a child’s food pattern:

- How often does the infant breastfeed?
- How frequently is the infant/child fed?
- How is formula prepared?
- What is the typical meal pattern?
- How much does he eat at one time?
- What supplements are used (energy, protein, enteral, vitamin, mineral)?
- Does the child have food allergies or intolerances or are there any food restrictions?

A discussion about behaviors, relationships, and attitudes related to food and eating might be started with these questions:

- What foods are preferred? Disliked?
- Can your child communicate hunger? Thirst?
- Who is present at mealtimes?
- Are mealtimes pleasant?
- Describe your child’s appetite.
- Is your child interested in eating?
- Do you think your child is underweight? overweight?
- Do you think your child eats too much? Too little?

The following questions may be useful for assessing a child’s feeding skills:

- What types of foods does your child eat?
  - Describe the texture
  - Describe the consistency
  - How many times does your child eat each day?

- Do you have concerns about your child’s feeding skills?
  - Does your child feed himself? With fingers? With utensils?
  - Does your child have problems chewing or swallowing? Gagging or choking?
  - Are there specific foods or textures that your child has difficulty with?
  - Does your child choke while eating? If so, how often does this happen?

- Can your child clearly communicate hunger and thirst?
- How does your child respond when food is offered?

Asking a caregiver about a child’s feeding history can also provide useful information:

- When were solid foods introduced?
- What types of solid foods were introduced?
- When did your child learn to drink from a cup?
- What was your child’s reaction to solids? To finger-feeding? To utensils? To the cup?