

Children with disabilities, especially those with feeding difficulties, suffer at an alarming rate from preventable malnutrition and dangerous feeding practices (e.g., supine feeding, rapid feeding, inappropriate food textures) that place them at risk for aspiration, pneumonia, and premature death. Global and national nutrition data should be disaggregated by disability to further the understanding of the links between disability and nutrition and monitor progress for this population. We, therefore, appreciate that feeding is included in assessing child's functioning. Our SPOON team of feeding and disability specialists and nutritionist would like to make the suggestions below.

For ages 5-17 years:

We suggest separating feeding from dressing himself/herself, given its strong link to nutritional outcomes. We suggest the following addition:

Q 1. COMPARED TO CHILDREN OF THE SAME AGE, DOES (name) HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH FEEDING?

WOULD YOU SAY (name) HAS: NO DIFFICULTY, SOME DIFFICULTY, A LOT OF DIFFICULTY OR CANNOT DO AT ALL?

No difficulty..... 1  
Some difficulty..... 2 --> Q2  
A lot of difficulty ..... 3 -->Q2  
Cannot do at all ..... 4 --> Q2

Q 2. WHAT TYPE OF DIFFICULTY DOES (name) HAVE WITH FEEDING (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Willingness to eat ..... 1  
Physical ability to eat.....2  
Problematic mealtime behavior .....3  
Coughing and choking during a meal.....4  
Chewing and swallowing .....5  
Ability to sit upright during meals..... 6

For children 2-4 years:

We recommend adding the same question as that for children 5-17 years to identify feeding difficulties. We know that it not only impacts the child (increased risk for malnutrition) but also the family (increased stress level and burden on primary caregiver).

For children 6-24 months:

We recommend asking the following:

DOES (name) HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH FEEDING?

WOULD YOU SAY (name) HAS: NO DIFFICULTY, SOME DIFFICULTY, A LOT OF DIFFICULTY OR CANNOT DO AT ALL?

No difficulty..... 1

Some difficulty.....	2
A lot of difficulty .....	3
Cannot do at all .....	4

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

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