

Including 'Scent' as a Factor in Feeding

Anchor Center for Blind Children routinely uses scents as a factor in planning learning routines such as feeding, play, and rest. Each child shows individual preferences, though these may change over time. General guidelines include:

- **CALMING:** Lavender, vanilla, chamomile
- **INVIGORATING:** Peppermint, cinnamon, coffee, lemon or other citrus, jasmine (Note: Research with adults has shown that the scent of jasmine at bedtime can help in achieving a restful night of sleep and a greater level of alertness the following day)

IDEAS:

- Use scents with caution. *Excessive* scent may be unpleasant for a child and possibly result in visceral reactions such as flushing, sweating, nausea, etc.
- Add scents to bathwater through gentle soaps or a mister
- Use a consistently scented lotion for baby massage to help the child relate a calming scent to this routine
- To alert a child for feeding time, try adding a drop or two of invigorating scent (mint, citrus) to a damp handwashing cloth
- Place a drop or two of a selected scent on a beanbag for sleeping or calming during feeding time.
- Identify the scents of various foods as you present them. For example, "Mmmm, *cinnamon* on applesauce! Spicy!"
- Be aware of the possible effect of multiple fragrances on feeding. For example, if the child prefers mild flavors and scents, the fragrance of a highly spiced meal being prepared for other family members may interfere with feeding time.

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