Managing feeding problems in children with Autism

Learning Objectives:

1) Review common feeding challenges seen in children with Autism.
   a. Medical
   b. Behavioral
   c. Environmental
2) Learn successful behavior management strategies in working with Autistic children.
3) Understand how to collaborate with other treatment providers to ensure successful management of feeding in children with Autism.

Strategies for managing feeding problems:

1) Gradual exposure and desensitization
   a. Sequential Oral Sensory (S.O.S.) approach to steps to eating
   b. Desensitization hierarchy
   c. Food play and exploration
   d. Relaxation training to manage anxiety
2) Behavior management
   a. Shaping
   b. Fading prompts
   c. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) or Discrete trial training (DTT)
   d. Positive reinforcement
   e. Offering choices
3) Mealtime routine and schedule
4) Modeling and use of social stories

Autism Speaks Tips:

1) Rule out medical factors
2) Stay calm and patient with the process
3) Take gradual steps toward eating
4) Tune into textures
5) Play with food
6) Offer choices and control
7) Appropriate use of rewards/reinforcements