Responsive Feeding and Satter’s Feeding Dynamic Models

Dear Editor,

We are heartened to see the article by Engle and Pelto (1) about responsive feeding, with its emphasis on psychosocial aspects of feeding. However, all the articles overlooked Satter’s work over the last 35 y with the theoretical definition of and practical intervention years with parent–child feeding interactions.

Rather than operationalizing responsive feeding, as indicated by Engle and Pelto (1), Satter (2) created the feeding dynamics model. In a 1986 article, Satter defined the feeding relationship as the complex of interactions that takes place between parent and child as they engage in food selection, ingestion, and regulation. To further summarize Satter’s article, appropriate feeding depends upon a division of responsibility: the parent is responsible for what is presented to the child to eat as well as for the physical setting and emotional environment. The parent takes leadership with choosing and providing food and timing feeding at the same times as s/he trusts and depends on the child to determine amount, preference, and eating capability. An appropriate feeding relationship supports the child’s stage-related developmental tasks and: 1) allows the child to develop positive attitudes about eating; 2) enhances the child’s ability to consume a nutritionally adequate diet; 3) allows the child to retain the ability to regulate food intake and grow consistently in accordance with his or her genetic endowment; and 4) teaches the child to appropriately participate in family mealtimes. The primary objectives with any feeding intervention are to support the parent in taking leadership with feeding and to protect or increase the parents’ trust in the child’s competence with eating.

Since 1986, Satter has published a number of juried articles and books defining and applying the feeding dynamics model. Her extensive training and the content of her website operationalize the feeding dynamics model by supporting parents and professionals in establishing and maintaining optimum feeding, solving childhood feeding problems, and preventing child overweight.

Sincerely,

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Literature Cited


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