

# First Bite: Evaluating the Acceptability of Caregiver Training Feeding Intervention with Autistic Children

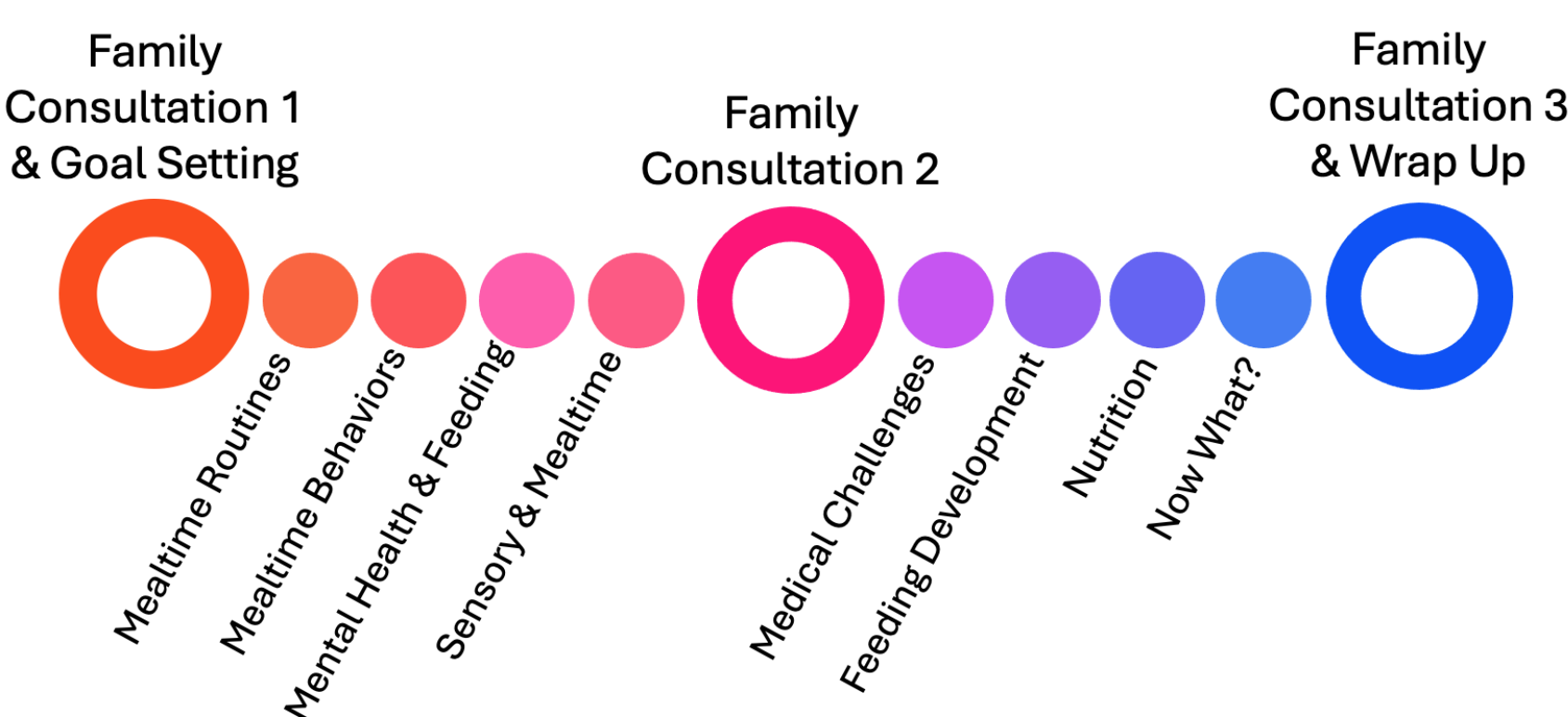
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## BACKGROUND

- ❖ Feeding challenges disproportionately affect autistic children
- ❖ Feeding challenges may include food selectivity/aversions and sensory processing differences, which can lead to dysfunctional mealtime behaviors and decreased nutritional intake
- ❖ Availability of feeding services is limited, waitlists are often extensive
- ❖ Lack of availability of feeding therapy can negatively impact caregiver-child relationships and overall family well-being

## METHODS

- ❖ First Bite (FB) is a caregiver-mediated intervention designed to improve access to feeding therapy for families of autistic children currently on waitlists
- ❖ FB is a 10-week virtual program consisting of 8 group sessions, 3 individual consult sessions, weekly training modules, and parent-parent discussion
- ❖ Pilot study: Participant average age was 5.9 years, with 9 males and 2 females; included White, Hispanic, and Black participants with co-occurring diagnoses of ADHD, ARFID, anxiety



## CAREGIVER ACCEPTABILITY

Question	Average Score (n=9)
Was the content and language used within First Bite easy for you and your family to understand? (1 = not easy to understand, 5 = very easy to understand)	5
Overall, how satisfied were you with First Bite? (1 = not satisfied, 5 = very satisfied)	4.67
How likely is your family to continue to use the strategies learned in First Bite? (1 = not likely, 5 = very likely)	4.67
How likely are you to recommend First Bite to another family experiencing feeding challenges? (1 = not likely, 5 = very likely)	4.78

## CAREGIVER RESPONSES

*"One of the biggest takeaways for us was the importance of giving [child] autonomy around some aspect of eating. This increased her consistency with eating dinner and significantly reduced dinner-time stress."*

*"[Child] is now able to eat independently."*

*"...in terms of measurable outcomes - it's a small window to have any significant change."*

## KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ FB may be a promising tool for improving access to feeding services for families who are on waitlists based on parent acceptability results
- ❖ Caregivers reported understanding and continuing learned strategies from the FB program
- ❖ Caregivers felt less worried and stressed about their child's mealtime behaviors

## NEXT STEPS

- ❖ Further pilots are needed to continue to assess the acceptability and effectiveness of caregiver-mediated waitlist interventions for feeding
- ❖ Upcoming Expanded Piloting of First Bite:
  - ❖ Continued piloting of FB at UWAC (n=10)
  - ❖ Additional pilot study with 3 new pediatric clinics (n=60)
  - ❖ Community pilot with families who may or may not be able to access waitlists for services (n=10)

## PRE-POST FB CAREGIVER RESPONSE SURVEY

