

# HANDS ON!!!!

## LEARNING TO USE A SPOON:

- Place only foods that are intended to be eaten with a spoon on the child's plate, do not give finger foods until the food that is to be eaten with a spoon is gone. This will lessen the confusion of which foods are to be eaten with a spoon and which with their fingers.
- When first teaching spoon feeding, help the child with hand over hand assistance, begin with assisting their hand with scooping and bringing to their mouth then gradually move to the wrist, then elbow, and if needed shoulder.
- Start with foods that stick to the spoon (oatmeal, mashed potatoes, pudding) and give small servings at first to encourage success. Do not be concerned about the mess, the skills will get better and the mess will be less!!!
- Have the child eat at regular meal times with the family so they can watch others and imitate.
- If a child has weakness in their grip, do activities to strengthen, including:
  - squeezing sponges in the bathtub
  - pulling toys that have a string
  - playing "tug-of-war" game with jump rope or towel.
  - pinching and squeezing playdough
  - using pounding toys

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- If a child is having difficulty with the coordination of scooping, work on this during non-meal times, activities include:
    - practicing scooping with spoon and putting into container while in the sand box
    - pouring activities, while in bathtub or use rice in large container
    - have child practice moving things using a spoon from one container to another