



Validation Process for My Child at Mealtime: Observing Parent Behaviors During Mealtime with Spanish Speaking Families

Lenna L. Ontai,¹ Karina Diaz Rios², Mical Shilts³, Louise Lanoue⁴, Christine Davidson⁴, Gloria Zavala⁴, Maria Espinoza⁴, Marilyn S. Townsend⁴



¹University of California, Davis Dept. of Human Ecology; ²University of California, Merced Public Health; ³California State University, Sacramento Dept. of Family & Consumer Sciences; ⁴University of California, Davis Dept. of Nutrition

BACKGROUND

- Interventions targeting obesity in young children increasingly include parenting behaviors as a target for change.
- Higher rates of child obesity in low-income children increases the need for efforts tailored to the unique needs of low-income families.
- Higher rates of obesity in Hispanic and Latino children warrant the development of valid self-assessment tools for low-literacy Spanish speakers.
- My Child at Mealtime (MCMT) is a self-assessment tool developed to identify parenting behaviors associated with dietary habits and weight in young children.
- MCMT has been found to be a reliable and valid instrument for English speaking, low-income audiences.
- Adaptation of the items to Spanish necessitates validation with mealtime behaviors of low-income Spanish speaking families of preschool aged children.

OBJECTIVE

Describe the process for validating the Spanish language My Child at Mealtime (MCMT) tool which assesses parent feeding styles in low-income, Spanish-speaking parents of preschool children.

METHOD

Participants

- Videotapes have been collected from 29 target parents and their preschool aged child.
 - Analysis presented from 17 who have complete coded data.

Procedure

- Participants were filmed during a mealtime in their home using the following criteria:
 - A meal that their children regularly eat at home during a time the target parent is present;
 - A meal that the majority of family members typically participate in;
 - A meal that occurs on a regular basis across a typical week.

Coding

- Video tapes of mealtimes coded by three independent coders using a modified version of the BATMAN procedure (Klesges et al., 1983).
- All coding conducted in Spanish by native Spanish speakers
- Targeted behaviors same as used for validation of English MCMT.
- All coding conducted with Noldus v.10
- Reliability across coders was established (Kappa range .75 - .88)

RESULTS

- The behaviors targeted for coding appear to be relevant mealtime behaviors in low-income Spanish speaking families.
- Frequency is highest for behaviors that encourage eating: verbal directive/demands, offer food, assist with eating, and feeding child.
 - Preliminary correlations suggest that these behaviors co-occur during mealtimes.
- Statements about food are also significantly associated with encouragement behaviors.
 - Parents are likely coupling behaviors with verbal statements to encourage eating during mealtimes.

NEXT STEPS

- Aiming to collect mealtime videos from a total of 60 families.
- Associations between observed behaviors and MCMT item responses will be used to validate the Spanish language MCMT tool.
- Further analysis will be conducted to assess the co-occurrence of parent behaviors during mealtimes.

Mealtime Parent Behavior Codes and Frequencies

Behavior Codes			Verbal Codes (only coded if mother is on camera)			Either Behavioral and Verbal Codes		
Primary Codes (range)	Description (examples)	Secondary Codes	Primary Codes (range)	Description (examples)	Secondary Codes	Primary Codes (range)	Description (examples)	Secondary Codes
Frequency per meal:								
Physical Manipulation (0-6) 0 (n=8) 1 to 3 (n=7) > 3 (n=2)	Parent physically encourages or discourages child's eating. Ex: Physically moving child. Ex: Moving child's hand so they don't get access to something. Ex: Standing behind, placing hands on shoulder.		Directive/Demand (0-17) Instruction: 0 (n=1) 1 To 4 (n=7) > 4 (n=9) Demand: 0 (n=13) 1 to 2 (n=3) Invitation: 0 (n=12) 1 to 4 (n=5)	Parent indicates to child that the child should eat (must be directed to child).	a. Encouragement or invitation to eat. Ex: "Come on, eat." a. Directive/instruction about eating. Ex: "Eat" (neutral tone, no exaggeration) Ex: "Don't chew with your mouth open." a. Demand that the child must eat. Ex: "Hurry up and eat."	Offers Food (0-20) To child: 0 (n=6) 1 to 4 (n=4) > 4 (n=7)	Parent verbally or nonverbally offers food to child. Ex: Mother asks child if they would like some cheese. Ex: Mother offers the child a spoonful of food, but child does not take a bite.	a. Directly to child b. Directs other child to offer food c. Directs other adult to offer food
Presents Food (0-9) To child: 0 (n=5) 1 to 4 (n=8) > 4 (n=4) To table: 0 (n=9) 1 to 3 (n=8)	Parent places food to make it available for child (on child's plate or within reach). Ex: Parent places food on the dinner table.	a. Directly to child b. Directs other child to present food c. Directs other adult to present food d. To general (on table)	Bargaining about eating (0-4) 0 (n=10) 1 to 4 (n=7) > 4 (n=0)	Parent engages in back and forth negotiation about quantity of food to be consumed by child or offers child rewards in order to get child to eat. Ex: "Eat four more bites of food." (child refuses) "Eat two more bites, then." Ex: "Come sit and eat and we'll go to your Tia's tomorrow."		Discouragement (0-2) Frequency per meal: 0 (n=10) 1 (n=3) 2 (n=4)	Parent discourages eating through verbal or physical means. Ex: "You've had enough mashed potatoes." (Takes plate away from child.) Ex: "Finish what's in your mouth first."	a. Verbal: Tells child they've had enough and to stop eating. b. Physical: Takes plate away from child, removes something from child's plate.
Modeling eating/drinking (0-10) 0 (n=5) 1 to 4 (n=8) > 4 (n=4)	Parent eats or drinks with child present (taking in bites of food and/or noticeable chewing/drinking). Ex: Parent takes a bite of a taco at the dinner table in view of child.		Statement/questions about food (0-30) 0 (n=1) 1 to 4 (n=2) > 4 (n=14)	Verbalization about food that is neither encouragement nor discouragement of child's eating. Can be directed to focal child or to everyone.	a. Positive- "This cereal sure is good, right?" b. Negative- "I don't really like tacos." c. Neutral- "Tomorrow we're going to eat chicken and rice."; "Are you done?"			
Assists with eating (0-19) 0 (n=2) 1 to 4 (n=8) > 4 (n=7)	Parent aids child with eating-related activity. Ex: Cuts up child's chicken. Ex: Adding salt, milk, etc. to food.							
Feeding Child (0-12) 0 (n=11) 1 to 4 (n=5) > 4 (n=2)	Parent physically places food or drink into child's mouth. Ex: Uses spoon to feed child soup.							
Differentiation between behavior codes:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If mother uses fork to move around food in child's plate, it is coded as "assists with eating." • If mother uses fork to grab food and put it near child's mouth, but child does not take a bite, it is considered "offer food." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If child takes a bite, then it is coded as "feeding child." • If mother uses fork to place food on child's plate or serve, then it is coded as "presents food." 								