**Snacks as a Self-Regulating Tool**

Have you ever craved certain foods or a warm drink when writing your report cards?  Or chewed gum while trying to focus?  Have you ever chewed on your pen caps while concentrating or bit your fingernails when nervous?  We all have oral sensory habits to some extent. Snacking is generally used for its nutritional benefits but it can also be a very powerful self-regulating tool.

**Allowing children to eat throughout the day or encouraging them to eat a snack during specific tasks (i.e. listening to instructions, completing independent seatwork) can be of great benefit.**

* It allows some discrete movements
* It is a calming repetitive movement
* It provides deep pressure to the jaw which is organizing, grounding and calming
* The movements of the jaw can muffle surrounding noises
* The different tastes and chewiness levels can also be alerting or calming
* It overall (movement + deep pressure + taste) helps to maintain focus
* It overall (movement + deep pressure + taste) helps to self-regulate

**Alerting Snack Ideas**

Pickles/olives

Citrus fruits; oranges, lemons, grapefruit

Lemonade

Ice-cold water

Popcorn

Rice cakes

Apple slices

Carrot sticks

Snap peas

Sweet and spicy snack mix

Spicy foods such as pepperoni sticks

Celery with cream cheese or peanut butter

Dry cereal

Dried fruit

Chewy

Crunchy

Sour/spicy

 

Sweet

Chewy

Resistive sucking

**Calming Snack Ideas**

Resistive sucking: Smoothie/applesauce through a straw

Bagels

Carrot sticks

Apple slices

Grapes

Dried fruit/fruit leather

Meat jerky

Popcorn

Gum

Chewy granola bars

Soft pretzels

Herbal tea