

**DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A FEEDING READINESS ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN SANTA ROSA, BINAN, AND SAN PEDRO LAGUNA****Marielle D. Centeno,  
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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to develop a feeding readiness assessment tool for children with ASD, for Occupational Therapy Practitioners working in Santa Rosa, Binan, and San Pedro Laguna. Specifically, this study determined the assessment used by occupational therapy practitioners in assessing feeding, determined the current status of assessment tools used by occupational therapists, and presented a feeding readiness assessment tool designed for children with ASD, and its evaluation from occupational therapy practitioners. Thirty (30) pediatric occupational therapists from selected private clinics were recruited in this descriptive-developmental study. The study involved surveys for the assessments used by OTs in assessing feeding skills, current status of assessment tools, and the evaluation of the developed feeding readiness assessment tool. Overall, pediatric OTs often ( $M=2.66$ ) use the identified assessments in assessing feeding skills in children with ASD, with parent-interview as the always used assessment. Overall, pediatric OTs always ( $M=3.31$ ) encounter identified situations which revealed the current status of administering an assessment tool, where respondents always ( $M=3.57$ ) experience that majority of existing pediatric feeding assessments are based in behavioral theory and interventions, and wherein there are no available feeding assessment tools in the clinics they are affiliated in. A Feeding Readiness Assessment Tool was developed and was rated as outstanding ( $M=3.78$ ) in the researcher-made evaluation questionnaire. This indicates that the feeding readiness assessment tool has successfully met the functions it serves for its users, the pediatric occupational therapists. Despite indications that pediatric OTs often use identified assessments such as parent interview and observation during therapy sessions, the use of a standardized tool that includes assessing sensory processing aspect is recommended. The Feeding Readiness Assessment tool can be a reliable tool for pediatric occupational therapists since it has included assessing postural stability, oral-motor skills, and sensory processing which was lacking in existing feeding assessment tools.

**Keywords:** Feeding, Assessment Tool, Pediatric Occupational Therapists, Sensory Processing