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**FEEDING CHILDREN : MOTHER'S FEEDING
DECISIONS AND THE DIETS OF THEIR
CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO TWO YEARS**

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fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
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ABSTRACT

This study examines mother's decision making about their young children's diets, as well as examining the diets of the children. Qualitative methods are used to study the women's decision making at a time when their children's diets are characterised by change. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain the perspective of mothers. Dietary information was collected using five day food records for a sample of thirty-three children under the age of two years. The dietary data is used for individual children to discuss feeding practices and reasons for these practices. On the whole the children's diets were found to be adequate in terms of the RNI, except for low intakes of vitamin E and iron among some of the children. The feeding practices were the result of an interaction between the mother and the child. The mother's decision about what food to offer the child took into account many factors. The women considered the effect of dietary practices on their child's health, but they also considered other aspects of child care and household management. The women's focus of concern changed in response to the immediate situation and broader contextual factors. They were actively learning about their child and applied the information they received from many sources to their own situation. The women's multiple concerns and their process of actively learning about their child would be best served with an active partnership approach to nutrition intervention.

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TABLE CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER 1- Introduction	1
CHAPTER 2- Background	4
2.1 Feeding Young Children: Nutritionist's View	4
2.1.1 Feeding recommendations and guidelines	5
2.1.1.1 Feeding recommendations and the family diet	7
2.1.2 Recommended nutrient intakes	7
2.1.3 Dietary assessment	9
2.1.3.1 Nutrient intake	10
2.1.3.2 Feeding practices	11
2.1.4 Influencing child feeding	11
2.1.5 Summary	13
2.2 Diet of Young Children in New Zealand	13
2.2.1 Breastfeeding/bottle feeding	14
2.2.2 Tea drinking	14
2.2.3 Age solids are introduced	15
2.2.4 Weaning foods	15
2.2.5 Nutrient intake	15
2.2.6 Overall diet	16
2.2.7 Nutritional status of infants	16
2.2.7.1 Anthropometric measurements	16
2.2.7.2 Iron deficiency	17
2.2.7.3 Cot death, asthma and eczema	17
2.2.8 Summary	18
2.3 Influences on the Diet of Young Children	18
2.3.1 The child	19
2.3.1.1 The child as regulator of intake	19
2.3.1.2 The child as indicator	20
2.3.2 Maternal cognitive processes	21
2.3.3 Maternal and household characteristics	24
2.3.4 Broader context	25
2.3.4.1 Nutrition and food information for parents	26
One to one consultation	26

Groups	27
Written materials	28
2.3.4.2 The food supply	30
2.3.4.3 Economic environment	32
2.3.4.4 Cultural norms	32
2.3.5 Summary	33
2.4 Summary and Objectives	33
CHAPTER 3- Research Philosophy: Assumptions and Associated Implications	35
3.1 Assumptions and Implications	36
3.2 Research Design	37
3.3 Analysis	39
3.4 Judging the Inquiry	39
3.5 Ethics	40
3.6 Dietary Methods	40
3.7 Summary	41
CHAPTER 4- Methods	42
4.1 Research Location and Sample Recruitment	44
4.2 Data Collection	44
4.2.1 Interviews	44
4.2.2 Diet records	44
4.2.3 Participant observation	45
4.2.4 Discussion groups	46
4.2.5 Document collection	46
4.2.6 Researcher's journal	46
4.3 Data Processing and Analysis	46
4.3.1 Qualitative data processing and analysis	47
4.3.2 Dietary intake data	48
CHAPTER 5- Milk to Family Food: An Overview	50
5.1 The Starting Point: A Milk Diet	50
5.2 The Family Diet	51
5.2.1 The family diet as goal	51
5.2.2 Influence of the child on the family diet	52
5.2.3 Why change?	53
5.2.4 A routine	54
5.3 Introducing New Foods: A Trial and Error Process	54
5.4 Decision Making/Problem Solving	55
5.4.1 Issues	56
5.4.2 Relevant knowledge	59
5.4.2.1 Means-ends analysis: How to get from A to B	61
5.4.2.2 Assumptions about differences between children and adults	63
5.4.2.3 Food attributes	65
Foods to offer	65

Required foods	66
Foods to avoid	69
Being able to "handle" a food	70
Avoiding "baddies"	71
Avoiding known problems	72
5.4.2.4 Meals and diets	72
Meal patterns	73
Variety	74
Balance and moderation	76
5.4.3 Integration	77
5.4.4 Plan/Intent	78
5.4.5 Offering foods and feedback	79
5.5 The Context	80
5.5.1 Immediate environment	81
5.5.1.1 The child	81
5.5.1.2 Food availability	81
5.5.1.3 Social situation	82
5.5.1.4 Health professionals	82
5.5.1.5 Household income	83
5.5.1.6 Broader context	84
5.6 Sources of Knowledge about Food and Related Issues	84
5.6.1 Recent input	86
5.6.1.1 Shared experience and ideas	89
5.6.1.2 Advice	91
5.6.1.3 Reasons	91
5.6.2 Knowledge about this child	93
5.7 Summary	95
CHAPTER 6 - Dietary Practices and Nutrient Intakes	96
6.1 The Sample	96
6.2 Starting Solids	96
6.3 Solids as a Source of Iron	99
6.4 Avoidance of Foods in the First Year	100
6.5 Beverages	102
6.6 Nutrient Intake	108
6.7 Nutrient Intake of Breastfed Children	111
6.8 Meals and eating events	115
6.9 Variety	116
6.10 Summary	116
CHAPTER 7- Case Studies	117
7.1 Case Studies	117
7.1.1 Karen- starting solids	117
7.1.2 Lynn- starting cow's milk	121
7.1.3 Mary- breastfeeding and solids	122

CHAPTER 8- Discussion	125
8.1 Summary and Practical Implications	125
8.1.1 Nutrition information	126
8.1.2 Contextual factors	130
8.2 Limitations of the Study	131
8.3 Areas for Future Research	132
REFERENCES	134
APPENDICES	148
Appendix 1 Pamphlets on Infant Feeding	
Appendix 2 Interview Guide and Diet Records Sheet	
Appendix 3 Researchers' Perspective	
Appendix 4 Diet Records	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1	Changes to the family diet	53 (a)
Figure 5.2	Means-ends depiction of Sarah’s knowledge related to feeding her child milk	62
Figure 6.1	Types of milk consumed	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table 6.1	Age of first introduction of solids and the main type of milk drink given at the time	98
Table 6.2	Nutrient intake of 3 children drinking cow's milk as their main drink compared to a group of children the same age consuming infant formula	105
Table 6.3	Nutrient intake of children not receiving breastmilk	109
Table 6.4	Distribution of nutrient intakes compared to the Australian RNI	110
Table 6.5	Nutrient intake of breastfed children from sources other than breastmilk	112
Table 6.6	Nutrient density of solid foods in the diet by age and main milk drink.	114