

Clinical Research (Including Outcomes of Intervention)

The Baby-Led Weaning Method in a Canadian Setting; a Focus on Mealtime Behaviors and Food Acceptance

M. Campeau¹, S. Philippe¹, R. Martini¹, B. Fontaine-Bisson¹

¹University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON

Introduction: Baby-Led Weaning (BLW) is an alternative weaning method that proposes to let children feed themselves starting at six months of age with suitable solid finger foods. BLW is now very popular among Canadian families; however, no study to date has addressed the behavioural and dietary impacts of this method in a Canadian setting.

Objective: The aim of the study was to determine if BLW influences the acquisition of healthy eating behaviours and children's food acceptance.

Methods: In this study, 82 children aged 10-14 months were recruited from the National Capital Region and Montreal regions. Half (n = 41) of the children followed the traditional weaning method, while the others (n = 41) were introduced to solid foods through the BLW principles.

Results: Compared to the conventional feeding method, BLW leads to a significantly better satiety-responsiveness score (13.1 ± 3.0 vs. 12.1 ± 3.0 , $p = 0.005$) and a slower eating speed score (11.1 ± 2.8 vs. 10.2 ± 2.9 , $p = 0.04$), respectively. No significant differences were observed between the two groups in terms of food acceptance. Parental pressure was found to be significantly associated with the consumption of dairy products, grain products and meat and alternatives ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: BLW may promote listening to internal signals of satiety and help regulate food intake.

Significance to the Field of Dietetics: Despite baby-led weaning being a hot topic in the field of pediatric nutrition in Canada, very little is known about it. Gaining knowledge about this alternative feeding method will help health practitioners better educate their patients.