

Feeding in the First Year

Feeding assumptions about children being natural eaters are common but misleading. The feeding journey can pose challenges that aren't immediately apparent and can escalate if not addressed. Factors like sensory sensitivities and oral-motor challenges can impact a child's relationship with food from early on. These issues, if left unattended, can intensify as the child grows. Early recognition and intervention are crucial for a child's well-being and involves an understanding of their sensory experiences, oral-motor skills, and feeding environment. A holistic approach to feeding can foster a healthy and enjoyable relationship with food, positively influencing a child's lifelong growth and development.



	Skills You Should Observe	Signs of a Potential Feeding Issue
0-4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sucking Suckling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor latch Unable to drink from breast Constantly pulling off Unable to open mouth Chomping and clicking Loss of milk at corners of mouth Slow feeds Refusal to eat Vomiting
5-7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child is able to swallow pureed baby food Moves food back in mouth Cleans spoon on both sides Closes lips to eat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently choking Refuses certain foods Resists eating from a spoon Food spills out of mouth at a fast rate Leaves residue and food on spoon
8-9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves food from teeth ridge to teeth ridge Tongue moves like a wave horizontally Child is eating soft mashed and meltable foods, e.g., cereal squares, puffs, lentil snaps, yogurt melts, freeze dried strawberries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food gets stuck on roof of mouth Does not munch on food; sucks on it and swallows whole Digestive issues emerge Can only use one side of mouth Pocketing of food on one side of mouth Turns spoon up to pour food in mouth
9-10 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lateralize tongue to both sides Uses diagonal patterns for eating Child can eat hard munchables, e.g., melon strips, dried mangos, hard biscuits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pocketing increases Scrapes food with teeth off of spoon Uses hand to support jaw Tilts head to move food Will only use one type of spoon Drinks from only one bottle, cup, etc.
10-11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Munching patterns emerge Uses circular movements to eat Child can now eat soft cubes, e.g., soups, diced peach cups, canned vegetables, banana chunks, avocado chunks, small pieces of bread, muffins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses hand to push food in mouth Uses hand to move food in mouth Uses water/liquid to swallow foods Picky eating begins
12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses all the skills previously learned Child is now eating mixed textures and soft table foods, e.g., hashbrowns, cooked apples, canned tuna, sweet potato fries, lunchmeats, meatballs, steamed vegetables, fish sticks, mozzarella sticks, veggie burgers, cheese pizza, ravioli, grilled cheese, chicken nuggets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets creative in refusing foods Systematically, in the next year, eliminates foods they cannot handle; attribute the issue with the food vs. a weakness, tightness, or coordination issue Compensations continue to become more sophisticated Will get up from table/wander Use avoidance behaviors such as crying, whining, and tantrums



If you observe signs of potential feeding issues in your child, we're here to help!

Contact us and we'll guide you and your child towards success and the joy of shared meals.