

FEEDING YOUR BABY: RESPONSIVE, INTERACTIVE, ENGAGED

6 MONTHS
TO
12 MONTHS

Babies tell us what they need using their faces, bodies, and voices

- I'm hungry!
- I feel full!
- I need quiet time!
- I'm ready to play!

Quiet Time!

- Turns head away
- Stops eye contact
- Squirms away
- Fussing or cries

Play Time!

- Eyes follow you
- Smiles eagerly
- Makes sounds
- Reaches out to you

During feeding, babies show they are eager for more by:

- Smiling or making “cooing” sounds
- Making eye contact with you or the caregiver
- Opening mouth and moving forward in the direction of food

Be Responsive, Interactive, Engaged when breastfeeding, or bottle feeding or feeding solid foods

- Respond to your baby's hunger cues quickly.
- **Look** at your baby. Smile and use eye-to-eye contact.
- Imitate facial expressions.
- Talk and play with your baby during feedings
- Respond to your baby's sounds and “words.”

Use your **words** to describe your baby's feelings of hunger and fullness, such as:

I see you pointing at the food. You would like more.

Turning your head away tells me you're full.

Snuggling into my shirt tells me you're hungry!

You're pushing the bottle away. You want to stop.

Time to Eat!

- Moves arms and legs in excitement
- Sucks lips, hands, clothing, other things
- Moves head toward mother or toward food
- Pulls on mother's shirt
- Opens mouth when food is seen
- Reaches out for food with hands
- Points at food or asks for food with words or other sounds

Crying is a late sign of hunger.

Time to Stop!

- Turns head to refuse food
- Pushes food away
- Clamps lips tightly together
- Releases the breast or the bottle, and does not search for it again
- Refuses nipple or bottle, if offered again

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Introducing solid foods.

- Give solid foods **in addition to** breast or bottled milk.
 - Introduce foods slowly, starting with one time per day.
 - Gradually add more times as baby gets older.
 - Encourage your baby to eat – **do not force your baby to eat.**
- Small amounts of food at first are good.
 - Little by little increase the amount of food offered each day.
- **Babies know how much they want, watch for their cues.**
- Slowly add a variety of foods of different textures and thicknesses.

Respect and respond to your baby's cues with paced bottle feeding!

Use these tips when feeding milk from a bottle:

- Hold the baby in an upright position, not lying down, so milk doesn't pool in baby's mouth.
- Let the baby draw the nipple into the mouth.
 - Stroke baby's lips gently with the bottle nipple to open baby's mouth.
- Feed the baby until the baby shows signs of fullness.
 - Take your time to avoid feeding too much in a short time.
 - Allow frequent pauses to discourage guzzling.
 - Give the baby a chance to feel full before becoming over-full.
 - Avoid coaxing the baby to finish the last bit of milk in the bottle after the baby shows signs of being done.
- Alternate the side you feed the baby during feedings.

Your baby's new skills!

- Holds head up unassisted.
- Sits up without help.
- Takes food from a spoon and swallows it.

Why worry about milk pooling in the mouth?

- Greater chance of tooth decay.
- Increased risk of ear infections.