

Sequence of Development and Feeding Skills

Baby's Approx. Age	Mouth Patterns	Hand and Body Skills	Feeding Skills or Abilities	Hunger and Fullness Cues
Birth through 5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suck/swallow reflex • Tongue thrust reflex • Rooting reflex • Gag reflex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor control of head, neck, trunk • Needs head support • Brings hands to mouth around 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swallows liquids but pushes most solid objects from the mouth • Coordinates suck-swallow-breathe while breast or bottle feeding • Tongue moves forward and back to suck 	<p>Hunger cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wakes and tosses • Sucks on fist • Cries or fusses • Opens mouth while feeding to indicate wanting more <p>Fullness cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seals lips together • Turns head away • Decreases or stops sucking • Spits out the nipple or falls asleep when full
4 months through 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-and-down munching movement • Can transfer food from front to back of tongue to swallow • Draws in upper or lower lip as spoon is removed from mouth • Tongue thrust and rooting reflexes begin to disappear • Gag reflex diminishes • Opens mouth when sees spoon approaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sits with support • Controls head • Uses whole hand to grasp objects (palmer grasp) • Recognizes spoon and holds mouth open as spoon approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes in a spoonful of pureed or strained food and swallows without choking • Drinks small amounts from cup (with spilling) held by another person, with spilling 	<p>Hunger cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cries or fusses • Smiles, gazes at caregiver, or coos during feeding to indicate wanting more • Moves head toward spoon or tries to swipe food towards mouth <p>Fullness cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreases rate of sucking or stops sucking when full • Spits out the nipple • Turns head away • May be distracted or pays attention to surroundings more

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5 months through 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to control the position of food in the mouth Up-and-down munching movement Positions food between jaws for chewing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to sit alone unsupported Follows food with eyes Transfers food from one hand to the other Tries to grasp foods such as toast, crackers, and teething biscuits with all fingers and pull them toward her palm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to eat mashed foods Eats from a spoon easily Drinks from a cup with some spilling Begins to feed self with hands 	<p>Hunger cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches for spoon or food Points to food <p>Fullness cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating slows down Clenches mouth shut or pushes food away
8 months through 11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves food from side-to-side in mouth Begins to use jaw and tongue to mash food Begins to curve lips around rim of cup Begins to chew in rotary pattern (diagonal movement of the jaw as food is moved to the side or center of the mouth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sits alone easily Transfers objects from hand to mouth Begins to use thumb and index finger to pick up objects (pincer grasp) Feeds self finger foods Plays with spoon at mealtimes, but does not spoon feed yet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to eat ground or finely chopped food and small pieces of soft food Begins to experiment with spoon but prefers to feed self with hands Drinks from a cup with less spilling 	<p>Hunger cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches for food Points to food Gets excited when food is presented <p>Fullness cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating slows down Pushes food away
10 months through 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotary chewing (diagonal movement of the jaw as food is moved to the side or center of the mouth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeds self easily with fingers Begins to put spoon in mouth Dips spoon in food rather than scooping Demands to spoon-feed self Begins to hold cup with 2 hands Drinks from a straw Good eye-hand-mouth coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to eat chopped food and small pieces of soft, cooked table food Begins self spoon feeding with help Bites through a variety of textures 	<p>Hunger cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses desire for specific food with words or sounds <p>Fullness cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shakes head to say "no more"

*Developmental stages may vary with individual infants. Source: WIC Infant Nutrition and Feeding Guide, 2007.