

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.