

RESPONSIVE FEEDING

FOR INFANTS

6-12 MONTHS



Your relationship with your infant is essential to happy and successful mealtimes! Using **responsive feeding** means that you feed your baby promptly when they show they are hungry, pay attention to their communication, and end the feeding when they show you they are full. As a parent, you can focus on connection and love at feeding times. Your infant will learn to eat the amount their body needs each time. Doing these things can lead to less feeding stress and more enjoyment!

YOUR INFANT

- Shows that they are hungry (See "I'm hungry!" below)
- Shows readiness for solid foods (ex: brings objects to mouth)
- Chooses what & how much to eat from what parent offers
- Explores food
- Learns how to eat with practice

"I'M HUNGRY! HUNGER CUES

- Begins to stir and become more active
- Increases mouth movements and may mouth fingers
- Watches others eat and/or reaches for food
- Feeds themselves or leans in towards food adult is offering
- Cries (late hunger sign)

"I'M FULL! FULLNESS CUES

- Stops sucking
- Does not open mouth for nipple, cup, or food
- Stops eating
- Loses interest or turns away from food

WHAT TO DO AS A PARENT

- Help your infant feel safe and supported
- Learn to understand what your baby wants and needs
- Feed your baby when they are hungry
- Eat with your infant when possible
- Let your baby feed themselves as much as possible

RESPONSIVE MEALTIMES ARE ABOUT

- Trust
- Clear expectations
- Togetherness
- Opportunities | Not demands
- No pressure
- Conversation | About things other than food

FAMILY BENEFITS

- Less family conflict and stress at mealtimes
- Baby learns to eat the amount they need (self-regulate)
- Supports child's self-feeding and overall development
- Your baby can learn to eat a variety of food

KEEP IN MIND:

- Your baby learns from watching you eat and drink.
- Your baby may take time to get to know foods; look for what they enjoy!
- Your baby will not always eat the same amount of food at each meal, especially when learning to eat solid foods.
- It's okay if your infant enjoys sweet foods.
- Getting messy is an important part of learning to eat.
- As your baby eats more solid food, they may drink less formula or human milk.

CHICAGO FEEDING
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