



**4-C Child and Adult Care Food Program**

# GOOD NUTRITION FROM THE START: BABY'S FIRST YEAR

## CONTINUING EDUCATION HOME ASSIGNMENT

***Most of all, establish a positive feeding relationship with  
infants.***

***Cherish the time you have providing love, warmth, and  
proper nutrition.***

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*Growth and development are more rapid during the first 12 months than at any other time. Infants generally double their weight in the first 4 to 5 months and triple their birth weight during the first year. A child 1 year old is expected to increase birth length by 50%. Infants are totally dependent upon others to protect them from danger and provide nutritious, safe food needed for growth and development. Helping infants receive food in an age appropriate manner is an important role for parents and child care providers.*

## **THE FEEDING RELATIONSHIP**

The feeding relationship refers to interactions that take place between the parent and child as they engage in food choice and eating. The interactions and communication that occur between a parent or caregiver and the infant during feeding impact the infant's ability to progress in personal feeding skills and consume a nutritionally adequate diet. To foster a high quality feeding relationship, the parent or caregiver should be responsive and sensitive to an infant's feeding cues.



## **HOW TO FEED**

Feeding should be a pleasant, social time. Before feeding, talk and play with the infant. Hold the infant in a sitting position. Cuddle the infant and provide eye to eye contact. Do not hurry the feeding process. Infants require at least 20 minutes per feeding. Stop 2 to 3 times during feeding to burp the baby.

Consider the following when providing the best possible care for the infant during the first year of life:

- Breast milk or iron fortified infant formula is the only food a baby needs until 4 to 6 months of age. Breast milk is the best food for baby, however iron-fortified infant formula also provides babies with all the nutrients they need to grow.
- Be sure formula is prepared according to package directions. Mixing formula with too much or too little water can cause serious health problems and even death in young babies.
- Avoid adding iron fortified infant cereal to the baby's bottle. Adding cereal means the baby will not be getting the formula needed. Cereal in a bottle can also cause choking in young babies.
- Avoid adding juice or other sweetened drinks to the bottle. Although babies like the sweet taste of juice and other beverages, these drinks fill them up and take the place of more nutritious breast milk or formula that babies need. Babies may be offered liquids from a cup between the ages of 6 to 8 months.
- Avoid starting solid foods early. This may mean that the baby will not drink enough milk and not get the calcium, protein, and iron that are so important for growth. These nutrients are in the right amount in breast milk and iron fortified formula



## READY FOR SEMI-SOLID FOODS?

Around 5 to 6 months, the infant's digestive system can begin digesting complex carbohydrates and proteins. At the same time, the iron stores from birth are gone. It is time to begin the introduction of semi-solid foods. By 6 to 7 months, the infant's kidneys are sufficiently developed to handle the nitrogen containing wastes from the addition of high protein meat products.



## INTRODUCING SOLID FOODS TO INFANTS

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that breast milk or a prepared iron fortified formula is the **ONLY** food fed to infants less than 4 to 6 months. Avoid serving regular cow's milk before 1 year. Introducing semi-solids before an infant is developmentally and physiologically ready is inappropriate.

A baby is ready to start solid foods typically between 4-6 months when they can sit on their own, turn their head from side to side showing they have had enough to eat, and accept food from a spoon without the tongue pushing the food out of their mouth. Avoid starting solid foods too early. Starting too early means that the baby does not get the calcium, protein, or iron that is important for growth.

Introduce solid foods gradually. Rice cereal is typically the first food given to a baby because it rarely causes an allergic reaction and it is easy to

digest. It is also a good source of iron and B vitamins. Do not serve cereal mixed with formula or breast milk from a bottle. Serving cereal in a bottle may hinder the infant's ability to learn to eat from a spoon and cause choking.

## INVOLVING THE INFANT IN SELF-FEEDING

Infants move toward self feeding around 6 to 7 months. Allowing infants to hold an infant spoon or a cup during feeding encourages eventual self feeding. The infant mimics the caregiver's activities. Babies at this age use a palmar grasp allowing them to hold large items like a teething biscuit. Picking up small pieces of food is difficult, but allow the infant to try.

Encourage the child to experience feeding with as many senses as possible. As the sense of touch is heightened, much exploration occurs through the mouth. Encourage exploration and expect messes.

Around 8 months, the infant has more manual dexterity. The child may use the pincer grasp to pick up smaller objects. The infant can participate in feeding. Parents and caregivers need to monitor the eating so the infant does not choke. Never leave a baby unattended with food.

By 9 to 12 months, more nutrient needs are being met through semi-solid foods. Ideally, the child is demonstrating beginning proficiency with both a cup and spoon. Limited self feeding has begun and should be encouraged. If the texture is soft and the pieces are small, many table foods are now appropriate for the child.

## FOOD SAFETY AND INFANT FEEDING

Infants are particularly sensitive and cannot fight bacteria as well as adults. Common symptoms of food borne illness include: nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea and can be deadly for the infant.

Remember the following food safety tips:

- ✓ Wash hands before preparing or feeding foods.
- ✓ Use clean utensils.
- ✓ Transfer baby food to a dish and discard leftovers.
- ✓ Refrigerate leftover food in the jar.
- ✓ Label jars with the date and discard 2 days after opening.
- ✓ Check that the safety button in the lid of a baby food jar is down and “pops” when opened.
- ✓ Discard formula or breast milk left in a bottle after feeding.
- ✓ Avoid honey and corn syrup for the first year.
- ✓ Be careful when warming baby’s food. Mix food thoroughly and check temperature to avoid hot spots. Never heat bottles in a microwave. Hot spots can cause serious burns. Heat bottles in warm water either in a container or under running water.

### **Resources**

National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI)  
Team Nutrition: [Feeding Infants](#)  
USDA: [Infant Nutrition and Feeding](#)

## INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLETE HOME ASSIGNMENT:

*Now you are ready to answer the questions on the following pages and earn 2 hours of continuing education.*

**Make a copy for yourself & return completed pages 5-7 to:**

4-C CACFP  
5 Odana Court  
Madison, WI 53719

Or you can email a scanned copy to [foodprog@4-C.org](mailto:foodprog@4-C.org) or fax a copy to 608.271.5380.

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**GOOD NUTRITION FROM THE START: BABY’S FIRST YEAR  
CONTINUING EDUCATION QUESTIONS**

<b>PROVIDER NAME</b>	
<b>PROVIDER NUMBER</b>	
<b>DATE COMPLETED</b>	

1. Infants typically \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_ in the first 4-5 months.
  
2. A child 1 year old is expected to increase birth \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. The “feeding relationship” refers to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Feeding an infant is a \_\_\_\_\_ time.
  
5. What is the only food infants really need until they are 4-6 months? \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. How do you feed and infant? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. How should formula be prepared? \_\_\_\_\_

8. The following should not be added to an infant's bottle: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. It cuts down on the nutrients the infant is getting from the formula and is a choking issue.
9. Infants like the \_\_\_\_\_ taste of \_\_\_\_\_ but these drinks fill them up and take the place of more nutritious \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Infants can be offered liquids from a \_\_\_\_\_ between the ages of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
11. List three foods to avoid serving before an infant's first birthday.
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
12. It is inappropriate to introduce \_\_\_\_\_ before an infant is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ ready.
13. Around the age of \_\_\_\_\_, the infant's \_\_\_\_\_ can begin digesting \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Iron-fortified infant cereal and \_\_\_\_\_ can begin to be introduced at 5-6 months.
15. By the age of \_\_\_\_\_ months, the infant's \_\_\_\_\_ are sufficiently developed to handle \_\_\_\_\_.

**16.** List 7 tips when introducing solid foods:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

**17.** When do infants begin to show self-feeding skills? \_\_\_\_\_

**18.** Infants at this age, 6-7 months, use a \_\_\_\_\_grasp, which allows them to hold large objects.

**19.** Infants have more manual dexterity at \_\_\_\_\_ months. At this stage the \_\_\_\_\_ grasp allows them to pick up smaller objects.

**20.** What are 5 safety tips to practice when feeding an infant?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

**21.** Serving iron-fortified infant cereal in a bottle may hinder the infant's ability to learn what? \_\_\_\_\_

**CONGRATULATIONS - YOU ARE DONE!**

**MAKE A COPY FOR YOURSELF & SEND ORIGINAL PAGES 5-7 TO:**

**4-C CACFP**

**5 ODANA COURT**

**MADISON, WI 53719**

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