PMP PARENTING at Mealtime & Playtime

Ohio Chapter
INCORPORATED IN OHIO
American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

6–12 months

Caregiver Tips

- For the next six months, babies will learn through tasting, smelling and touching food. **Making faces or spitting out new foods is normal.** Sometimes baby gags when eating. Baby is learning where food goes in the mouth. Making faces, spitting food, and gagging does not mean baby dislikes the food.
- **Expect mealtime to be messy and fun.**
- Set **regular feeding times** with baby. Some days baby will eat less than other days.
- Let baby be **independent.**

Feeding Advice

- If you are breastfeeding or formula feeding, let your baby decide how much to drink.
- The amount of milk they drink will decrease as they eat more solid foods.
- Ask your baby's doctor about if Vitamin D supplementation is needed.

For more information about breastfeeding click here.

Introducing food

- Offer new foods like soft veggies when your baby is most hungry.
- Offer lots of different fruits and vegetables.
- Stay positive. Don't be surprised if you have to offer a new food many times for baby to try it.
- Celebrate baby touching new foods with hands, lips, and tongue.

Click here for more information about transitioning to solids.

Self-feeding with finger foods*

- Offer new colors, flavors, textures and smells during mealtime. Give small tastes.
- Enjoy family meals. Place your baby in a booster seat or high chair at the table. Let babies feed themselves.
- Do not use food for reward or comfort.
- Baby will let you know when they are done – tugging at their bib, turning their head or pushing away the plate or spoon.

**Beware of choking hazards (ask your healthcare provider).*

What should baby be drinking?

- Around nine months, offer baby small amounts of water in a cup. Gradually move to drinks in a regular cup. Let baby learn to move it to his mouth, spill it, and drink it. Teach baby that sitting at the table is important for meals and snacks.
- At one year, offer milk at meals and water in between meals. Juice is not necessary.

Activity Advice

- Enjoy watching your baby crawl, reach, play with toys or walk.
- Play simple games together, like hiding or rolling balls.
- Use all five senses to play by dancing to music, smelling new things, looking at colors, and hand or clapping games.
- Screens like TV, computers, tablets, video games and cell phones can take away from time to move and explore.
- Help build their words by talking to them and letting baby practice repeating.

Sleep Advice

- Continue a calming sleep routine with low lights, a warm bath, and reading together.
- No eating or screens before bed.
- It is normal and best for babies at this age to sleep about 14 hours each day.

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Your Baby is Changing!

- Watch your baby study new things with all five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, feel).
- At first, your baby will point, screech, babble, and shake their head to show hunger or feeling full. Gradually they will use sounds, then words.
- Point out colors and count what's on the plate.
- Around 9 months they learn how to use their thumb and first finger to pick up small, soft food chunks, such as pieces of cooked sweet potato, banana, or pear.

Fun at Mealtime

- Talk or sing when you sit with them. Ask questions and point.
- Put new and different foods and flavors on baby's finger or fist. Mealtime is playtime!
- Offer your baby lots of colors, textures, smells, and tastes. Let baby squish, drop, splash, lick, and mix them up.

Play with a Purpose

- **Talk** – Say out loud what you see them doing, like "That's a banana. Are you squishing it?" When they babble or make sounds, talk back to them.
- **Big muscles** (legs, back, arms) – Put things just out of reach to make them roll, scoot, crawl or pull up to get them.
- **Hands and fingers** – Give them toys they can grab that feel rough, smooth, soft, furry. Offer things that light up or make sound (flash light, rattle, bean bag, wrapping paper).

Try This!

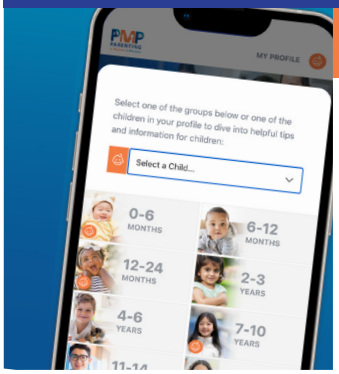
As you offer any new food, describe the food using all five senses. Say "Mmm, tasty," then put a bite in your mouth and smile. Try yogurt and say "That's sweet" or a cracker and say "That's crunchy." It's important to use descriptive phrases other than like/dislike to help your child learn to describe how they feel about foods.

What Comes Next?

- By 24 months, your baby should learn to eat the same foods that your family does.
- Be aware of your baby's habits and tastes – they will continue to change. Baby will go through phases and start to become more selective. Continue offering many foods and don't assume that what they like will stay the same.
- Keep regular mealtimes, snack times, play times, nap times, reading times, and bed times. Routine is better for baby and easier for you.

Click here for information about 12-24 months

Ohio AAP PMP Mobile App
Search Parenting at Meal and Playtime on Apple Store or Google Play



App Highlights...

- Physician-endorsed materials for parents to access on-demand
- Resources for parents organized by age
- Text reminders sent monthly and/or for age milestones
- Easy sign-up
- Videos on feeding, play, nutrition and more

Available on the App Store
GET IT ON Google Play

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