

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Part: 1302 Program Operations

Subpart: D- Health Program Services

Section: 1302.44 Child Nutrition

Subject: Transitioning Babies to Solid Foods

Policy:

Guidelines for successful transitions from a liquid diet to solid foods, in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Procedure:

1. Provide parents with information on the development of children’s eating habits for a healthy start, what feeding skills to expect and watch for when making choices for their child.
2. Feeding Solid Foods: If teachers notice the signs that a baby is ready for solid food, talk to the parents and provide them with the attached handout, **“For Parents: Is Your Baby Ready for Solid Foods.”**
 - A. At approximately 6 months of age, the baby will be ready to start eating solid foods. Age is only a guideline; some babies may be ready at 5 months and others at 7 months. Parents and teachers must watch for the following signs that a baby is or is not developmentally ready for solid foods.
 - 1) Baby is able to sit in a chair and has good control of their head.
 - 2) Baby can move their tongue to help swallow food. The tongue does not automatically push the food out of their mouth.

So, if the baby’s tongue automatically pushes the food out of their mouth, they are not ready for solid foods.
 - 3) Baby opens their mouth when food comes toward them, or baby reaches for the food.
 3. Talk with the parents, so you will know when they have started feeding their baby solid foods. Some guidelines for follow-ups to this conversation:
 - A. If parents indicate baby **is not** eating solid foods yet:
 - 1) Continue to offer breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula in the center.
 - 2) Talk to the parents and provide them with information on when a child is developmentally ready for solid foods and the benefits of adding them to his/her diet. Encourage them to talk to their physician about introducing solid foods.
 - 3) Ask the parent to let you know when they start feeding their baby solid foods.
 - B. If parents **are** feeding baby solid foods:
 - 1) The baby must be fed solid foods in our Early Head Start Program.
 - 2) Ask the parents to complete the attached form, **“For Parents: What Is Your Baby Eating? Let Us Know.”** Ask the parents to keep us informed of food items as the baby tries new foods and textures.

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- a) Both parents and teachers should offer babies different textures of foods as they get older, to help them learn or strengthen different feeding skills.
- b) Provide parents with a copy of the attached chart, **“Introducing Different Textures of Food Based on Feeding Skills.”**

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For Parents: Is Your Baby Ready for Solid Foods?

Feeding your baby the right food at the right time helps him or her get the nutrition needed for good health. Your baby will grow to enjoy many types and textures (smooth, lumpy, and so on) of food during his or her first year.

How Can You Tell When Your Baby Is Ready to Eat Solid Foods?

Your baby is ready to solid foods if he or she:



Opens his or her mouth when foods come his or her way or reaches for food.



Sits in a highchair with good head control.



Uses his or her tongue to move food from the spoon into his or her mouth. The tongue does not automatically push the food out of his or her mouth.



Why Does Your Baby Need to Try Solid Foods?

Starting solid foods when your child is developmentally ready is important because:

- Your baby is getting bigger and needs more calories and nutrients than can come from solid foods.
- It gives your baby a chance to try different foods so her or see will like them at an early age and will continue to eat them as he or she gets older.

Tip: Many, but not all, babies show signs that they are developmentally ready for solid foods at around 6 months.

Source: Giving Babies a Healthy Start with the CACFP

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**For Parents: Have You Already Started Giving Your Baby Solid
Foods? Please Let Us Know!**

Please complete this handout and give it to your childcare provider.

Today's Date

Baby's Birth Date

Baby's Name (first and last)

Parents Name (first and last)

What foods have you given to your baby? _____

Has your baby had an allergic reaction to any foods? _____

Did your baby's health care provider tell you that your baby has a food allergy or intolerance? Yes/No
If YES, which foods should not be served to your baby in childcare? _____

If your baby has a reaction to a food, who should we call? Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Phone number: _____

If your baby has a reaction to food at childcare, is there medication your baby's health care provider said
to give to him or her? _____

Are there foods your family does not eat due to religious reasons? Yes/NO
If YES, which foods does your family NOT eat? _____

Is there anything else we should know about what or how your baby eats? _____

Parents Signature _____

Source: a handout from *Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*
<https://teamnnutrition.usda.gov> ▪ FNS 786A ▪ March 2019
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For Parents: What Is Your Baby Eating? Let Us Know!

Today's Date **Baby's Name (first and last)**

Baby's Birth Date **Parent's Name (first and last)**

Is your baby eating solid foods? (circle) Yes No

What textures of food do you give your baby? (Circle all that apply)

Pureed Mashed Ground Finely Chopped

Which of these foods does your baby currently eat? (Check all that apply)

Grains

____ Crackers ____ Iron fortified infant cereal (check all that apply)

 ____ Barelly cereal ____ oat cereal

 ____ Wheat cereal ____ rice cereal

____ Ready to eat cereal (such as whole-grain o-shaped cereal)

____ Pieces of bread/toast ____ Pieces of pita bread ____ Pieces of soft tortilla

Meat and Meat Alternatives (protein foods and dairy)

____ beans ____ beef ____ pork ____ chicken ____ cottage cheese

____ eggs ____ fish ____ turkey ____ cheese ____ yogurt ____ shellfish

Vegetables

____ broccoli ____ butternut squash ____ cauliflower ____ corn ____ spinach ____ peas

____ carrots ____ sweet potatoes ____ tomatoes ____ green beans ____ other: _____

Fruits






____ apples ____ apricot ____ bananas ____ blueberries ____ mangos ____ peaches

____ pears ____ prunes ____ strawberries ____ other: _____

What else does your baby eat? _____

Parent Signature: _____

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Introducing Different Textures of Food Based on Feeding Skills

	Birth-5 months	Around 6-8 months	Around 8-12 months
Feeding Skills	 <p style="text-align: center;">Baby can suck/swallow.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Baby can move food from spoon to back of mouth and swallow.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Baby can pick up pieces of food with fingers</p>
Texture of Food	<p>Liquids (breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula)</p>	<p>Pureed and mashed soft foods</p> <p>Liquids (breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula)</p>	<p>Ground or finely chopped soft solid foods*</p> <p>Ready to eat cereal, such as whole grain o-shaped cereal. Strips of breads. Small pieces of crackers. **</p> <p>Liquids (breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula)</p>
Feeding Style	 <p style="text-align: center;">Breastfeeding or bottle feeding</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Spoon-fed by you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduce a cup</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Baby can feed self with a spoon or pick up finger foods</p>

***To help prevent choking, grind, or finely chop foods to no more than ½ inch in size or cut into thin slices that can easily be chewed.**

****Choose crackers without seeds, nuts, or whole grain kernels to avoid choking.**