

FEEDING DEVELOPMENT

0–3 months

- Gag reflex (diminished by 7 months)
- Rooting reflex
- Suck–swallow reflex
- Drools
- Anticipates feeding
- Brings fingers to mouth

3–6 months

- Phasic bite-and-release pattern used for most things placed in mouth (biting is not controlled or sustained)
- Uses tongue to move pureed food in mouth
- Swallows pureed food
- Gumming action on solid food like cracker (jaw movements are up and down)

6–9 months

- Holds bottle without assistance, may remove and replace
- Feeds self cracker, munching pattern
- Tongue retraction in sucking
- Absence of tongue protrusion during spoon feeding
- Can protrude tongue
- Can lateralize tongue

9–12 months

- Finger feed dry cereal, soft foods, mashed table foods
- Voluntary biting on food and objects
- Helps guide spoon and cup to mouth
- Controls drooling

12–18 months

- Finger feeds part of meal
- Bites and chews food well (rotary chewing)
- Holds own spoon, pronated grasp
- Scoops food
- Directs spoon to mouth without spillage, palm down
- Turns spoon over in mouth
- Drinks well independently, few spills (good coordination of suck, swallow, and breathing)

18–24 months

- Distinguishes edible versus no edible
- Uses fork
- Unwraps edible item
- Gives up bottle
- Drinks from cup

2–3 years

- Sucks through a straw
- Tongue-tip elevation used for swallowing
- Holds small cup in one hand
- Brings spoon to mouth, palm up
- Eats meats and raw vegetables
- Feeds self independently with set up with little spillage
- Uses a rotary chew pattern
- Lips are closed during chewing
- Opens jars
- Pours from a small container

3–4 years

- Get drink from faucet
- Attempts to cut with knife

4–5 years

- Holds spoon with fingers for solid foods
- Holds fork with fingers
- Uses straw without mashing the end
- Fixes dry cereal
- Pours from large container
- Uses napkin

5–6 years

- Cuts with knife soft foods
- Carries drink without spillage

6–7 years

- Cuts independently with knife
- Makes simple sandwich