

## Developmental stages in infant & toddler feeding

### 12 months–4 years

	12 months	12 months–2 years	14/15 months
<b>Motor and cognitive development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises food by sight, smell and taste</li> <li>Uses words to ask for, or names foods that they might want</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can group objects and foods into categories based on the way they look</li> </ul>	
<b>Social interaction</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imitation of other peoples' behaviour increases and improves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imitates eating behaviour and food preferences of adults</li> </ul>
<b>Feeding skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can begin to drink from an open cup</li> <li>Side teeth appear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can cope with most textures offered but chewing not fully mature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most infants can feed themselves with a spoon</li> </ul>
<b>Taste, texture and smell preferences</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More likely to eat foods that look like foods that they know they like</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will often try a food if they see an adult eat it</li> </ul>
<b>Signalling hunger, satiety and dislike</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throws food, signals or says 'no' to unwanted food</li> <li>Distracted by toys during mealtimes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gets down from chair when no longer hungry or has lost interest in meal</li> </ul>
<b>Appetite regulation</b>			

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	20 months	2 years	3–4 years
<b>Motor and cognitive development</b>			
<b>Social interaction</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imitates other toddlers' behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imitates eating behaviour of age-mates</li> <li>Changes food preferences to be like age-mates'</li> </ul>
<b>Feeding skills</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can cope with chewing most of the foods given in a family meal</li> </ul>	
<b>Taste, texture and smell preferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food disgust and contamination response appears in some children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food preferences seen now predict food preferences throughout childhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows preference for restricted or withheld foods</li> </ul>
<b>Signalling hunger, satiety and dislike</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The neophobic response 'fear of new foods' appears; new foods rejected, might also reject foods eaten before</li> <li>Food is rejected on sight without tasting</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The range of foods in a young child's diet now predicts the range of foods that will be accepted and rejected in later childhood and adulthood</li> </ul>
<b>Appetite regulation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Might overeat if served large portion sizes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some children respond to prompts to overeat whereas other children reduce the amount they eat when pressured</li> </ul>

An Infant & Toddler Forum initiative

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