

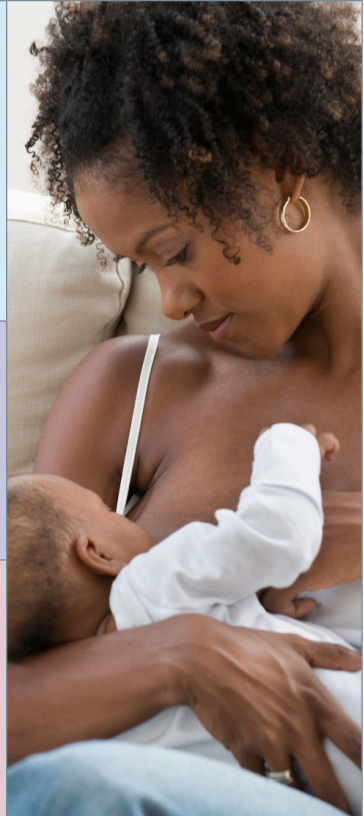
## Developmental stages in infant & toddler feeding

As a parent you will naturally want to know what to expect in your child's development. You might wonder when you'll see them develop certain feeding and drinking skills.

The developmental milestones shown below are evidence-based and can be used as a helpful guide to typical child development, but do remember that all infants are different.

The age at which infants achieve many skills depends on how often they are promoted by parents and carers and performed by the child. It is normal for there to be some variation in the ages at which an infant or toddler achieves a new skill.

### Birth to 4 months

	Birth	2 months	3 months
<b>Motor and cognitive development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can bring hand to mouth and opens mouth ready to suck</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holds objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holds onto objects and puts them into the mouth</li> </ul>
<b>Social interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prefers to look at faces</li> <li>Copies adult facial expression</li> <li>Will smile but not socially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By now recognises familiar faces</li> <li>Begins to smile at faces</li> </ul>	
<b>Feeding skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sucking and swallowing seen in the womb</li> <li>Tongue, lips and jaw move together in sucking movement</li> <li>Can move tongue around mouth and in and out of mouth</li> <li>Sucks fist</li> <li>Gags in response to objects in the mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can move liquids such as milk from a spoon to the back of the mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lips, tongue and jaw begin to move independently</li> <li>Likes to experience and explore different shapes and textures using hands and mouth; this leads in later months to better acceptance of foods with differing textures</li> </ul>
<b>Taste, texture and smell preferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some strong taste preferences learned from the taste of breast milk, and in the womb from mother's diet</li> <li>Clearly shows likes and dislikes of tastes</li> <li>All infants born liking sweet tastes</li> <li>Some infants born disliking bitter tastes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By now shows a preference for known smells and tastes</li> </ul>	
<b>Signalling hunger, fullness and dislike</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turns head in search of nipple</li> <li>Sucks fist when hungry</li> <li>When full, sucks slowly or stops sucking or cries and turns head away from nipple</li> <li>Can show facial expression of dislike or disgust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will play with nipple/teat when no longer hungry</li> </ul>	
<b>Appetite regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can begin to take the amount of milk feed that they need for their growth</li> <li>'Responsive' feeding (offering feeds when hunger is indicated but not always feeding in response to crying) helps maintain a healthy weight gain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now <b>completely</b> able to regulate milk intake to meet their growth and energy needs but crying does not always mean that the infant is hungry</li> </ul>	