



kids therapy made simple

Development of Self-Feeding



Introducing your child to Self-Feeding

There comes a time in every parent's life when your child is ready to try to eat food.

Some find this time exciting, others find it terrifying. An important thing to note is that these first months of introducing food and the concept of self-feeding to your child are just that - an introduction. Your child will still receive a majority of their caloric intake from breast milk or formula.

Since this is a time of introduction, have fun with it. Provide your child with occasions to explore their food - with their eyes, hands, mouth, fingers and sometimes even their hair.

Your child will move through a developmental progression of self-feeding that will eventually lead to the proper use of utensils (hopefully).

Self-Feeding without Utensils

By 6 months

Self-Feeding begins when child handles their own bottle. They also begin to open their mouth in anticipation of being presented food or in trying to put food in their own mouth.

6 - 9 months

Child begins to self-feed with hands through a raking grasp- child uses all 4 fingers and thumb to pick up object in the palm of their hand and then transfers to mouth by opening fingers and stabilizing food with their palm.

9-12 months

As pincer grasp evolves child begins to secure object between the pad of their thumb and the pad of their index finger. Finger food are then transferred into their mouth with the release of the grasp. Pureed foods, soft foods and yogurts may still be consumed using a raking grasp until the child develops the ability to hold their own spoon.

Learning to use Utensils



By 6 months

As pureed foods are introduced, child begins to become familiar with a spoon- its shape, what it feels like and how it's used.

8 - 11 months

Child begins to show interest in holding the spoon as they are fed. They begin to reach for the spoon and assist in guiding it into their mouths. This is a great time to use 2 spoons- one for you, one for your child. Allow your child to explore and have fun with their spoon.

12-15 months

Child begins to hold their own spoon and poke at their food. If they're eating a puree or yogurt they may be able to dip their spoon and then bring it to their mouth independently.

15 months

Fork skills begin to emerge as child becomes more comfortable using the spoon.

18-24 months

Child now scoops food onto their spoon, brings the food to their mouth and turns to spoon over to avoid spilling their meal. They are also able to use a fork efficiently now.