

Developmental Feeding Skills: Birth to Age 36 Months

Age (months)	Feeding/Oral Motor
Birth to 4-6	<p>Nipple feeding, breast, or bottle Hand on bottle during feeding (2-4 months) Maintains semiflexed posture during feeding Promotion of infant-parent interaction</p>
6-9 (transition feeding)	<p>Feeding more upright position Spoon feeding for thin, smooth puree Suckle pattern initially Suckle →suck Both hands to hold bottle Finger feeding introduced Vertical munching of easily dissolvable solids Preference for parents to feed</p>
9-12	<p>Cup drinking Eats lumpy, mashed food Finger feeding for easily dissolvable solids Chewing includes rotary jaw action</p>
12-18	<p>Self-feeding: grasps spoon with whole hand Holding cup with 2 hands Drinking with 4-5 consecutive swallows Holding and tipping bottle</p>
>18-24	<p>Swallowing with lip closure Self-feeding predominates Chewing broad range of food Up-down tongue movements precise</p>
24-36	<p>Circulatory jaw rotations Chewing with lips closed One-handed cup holding and open cup drinking with no spilling Using fingers to fill spoon Eating wide range of solid food Total self-feeding, using fork</p>

Source: Adapted from Arvedson and Brodsky¹⁰ (pp. 62-67). Swallowing and feeding in infants and young children (2006).