

Leaving babyhood behind

His ability to grasp now means your child will be easily picking up his food with two to three fingers instead of his entire hand. His ability to grasp now means your child will be easily picking up his food with two to three fingers instead of his entire hand. He's exploring how to eat with utensils as he begins to use a spoon and fork. He's still learning how to drink from an open cup and sometimes uses a straw. All of these advances make your little guy think he can do it all himself. All babies progress differently, but if you are concerned your child isn't keeping up with others his age talk to your doctor.

DID YOU KNOW? Better coordination and feelings of independence will keep your toddler constantly on the go. Signs of readiness and feeding recommendations for infants above 1 year of age

Signs of readiness

Feeding recommendations

Takes foods easily with fingers

Offering finger foods will allow your toddler to continue to develop the motor skills

Turn spoon in mouth

Encourage your toddler to keep practicing and ensure that mealtime is fun and enjoyable

Begins to self-feed with spoon

Continue to encourage your toddler to feed herself with a spoon and offer assistance if she becomes frustrated

Begins munching with rotary chew

Offering soft foods cut into small pieces will help encourage self-feeding and development of chewing skills

Picks up and puts down cup

Use age-adapted cups for liquids other than breast milk.

What to expect at 12-18 months

He's trying out utensils in different ways, using spoons for dipping and scooping up food with his fork.

First-year molars have come in and he's getting more practice chewing.

She tilts a sippy cup backward with both hands because his wrists can rotate.

She is excited to sit at the table. Social time with the family is as important as the food.

What to expect at 19-24 months

Less predictable eating habits mean he may eat lots one day and hardly be interested the next.

He may hesitate as new foods are introduced, so it may take several tries before he opens up. Never insist that he finish what's in his bowl, but rather allow him to rely on his hunger and fullness cues.

He may exaggerate the chewing action, opening his mouth wider than necessary and causing some food and saliva to dribble out. That's to be expected and is perfectly okay.

He'll prefer the familiar routine of mealtime - seeing the same bib, bowl and utensils is comforting to your toddler.

His larger height and weight will usually mean that a high chair is no longer needed as he takes his own seat (or booster seat) at the table.