

Feeding Your Baby

for parents

Congratulations! Your baby is entering a child care program that participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP helps assure that your baby receives healthy food each day in child care by providing training and resources to your child care provider. Feeding babies can be confusing, especially for first time parents. The good news is that your child care provider is on your team and will work closely with you as your baby tries new, healthy foods for the first time.



What will my baby eat in child care?

- Breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula provide all the nutrition most babies need for the first 6 months.
- Most babies become developmentally ready for solid foods around 6 months of age. Work with your pediatrician and child care provider to look for signs of developmental readiness.
- Once you begin serving solid foods to your baby, communicate closely with your child care provider.
- Introduce new foods gradually and serve foods of an appropriate texture to prevent choking.
- By around 7-8 months, most babies should be eating a variety of solid foods from all food groups (vegetables, fruits, grains, proteins, and dairy).

Sample Infant Menu

Your child care provider follows these requirements but has the flexibility to introduce new foods gradually.

Birth through 5 months	6 through 11 months
Breakfast, Lunch or Supper	
4-6 fluid ounces breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula	6-8 fluid ounces breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula; and 0-4 tablespoons iron-fortified infant cereal, meat, fish, poultry, egg, cooked dry beans, or cooked dry peas; or 0-2 ounces of cheese; or 0-4 ounces of cottage cheese; or 0-4 ounces or 1/2 cup of yogurt; or a combination of the above; and 0-2 tablespoons vegetable or fruit or a combination of both
Snack	
4-6 fluid ounces breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula	2-4 fluid ounces breast milk or iron-fortified formula; and 0-1/2 slice bread; or 0-2 crackers; or 0-4 tablespoons infant cereal; or ready-to-eat breakfast cereal; and 0-2 tablespoons vegetable or fruit or a combination of both



Why introduce solid foods around 6 months?

Feeding solids too early puts infants at risk of:

- Developing diabetes, obesity, eczema, celiac disease
- Not getting enough of the key nutrients and calories in breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula
- Choking, gagging

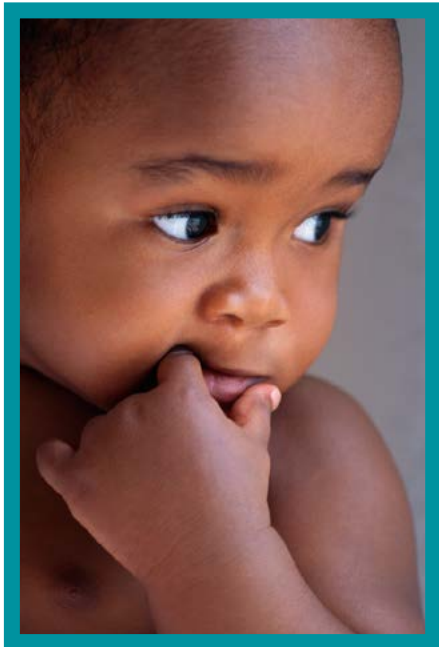
Feeding solids too late puts infants at risk of:

- Becoming malnourished
- Poor growth
- Developing anemia related to iron deficiency
- Not learning to eat solid foods properly

Is your baby ready for solid foods?

There is no single best way to know when babies are ready for solid foods, but here are a few helpful signs:

- Sitting up with good head control
- Opening his/her mouth when food is coming
- Watching others eat, reaching for food, and seeming eager to be fed
- Moving food from a spoon into his/her throat
- Doubling his/her weight since birth or weight 13 pounds or more



Child Care Requirements

Here are a few examples of requirements providers must follow for infants:

- **Avoid putting infant cereal in a bottle.** This practice is not allowed by CACFP without a medical form because it is a choking hazard and increases the risk of overfeeding.
- **Feed babies on demand, not on a schedule.** Because babies have small stomachs and are growing quickly, they need to eat small, frequent meals. Strict meal and snack schedules for babies are not allowed by CACFP.



Foods to Avoid

Many foods are not recommended for babies because they are not safe or nutritious. Child care providers generally avoid serving these foods to babies and prefer that parents avoid bringing them to child care:

- **Sweet foods** such as sugary yogurts, cereals, desserts, and juices increase preferences for sweet foods making it more difficult to introduce other foods like vegetables.
- **Salty and high-fat foods** such as hot dogs, chicken nuggets, and fish sticks.
- **Unsafe foods** such as honey, home canned foods, raw or undercooked meat, poultry, eggs, and fish may contain harmful bacteria.
- **Round, sticky, or hard foods** such as popcorn, nuts, seeds, and nut butters are a choking hazard.

This project is funded at least in part by USDA funds through the Michigan Department of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. (11/2015)