

# When do children learn to feed themselves?

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Children learn to feed themselves over time:

4-5 months:

- Places both hands on bottle

5-6 months:

- Holds bottle
- Transitions to solid foods

6-7 months:

- Drinks from cup held by adult

9-10 months:

- Finger feeds independently
- Holds cup with handles

12-14 months:

- Holds cup and drinks
- Brings spoon to mouth, turning spoon over and placing in mouth

15-24 months:

- Scoops food and brings to mouth
- Uses spoon/fork with palm-up grasp

30-36 months:

- Pours liquids
- Stabs food with fork

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- To help your child learn to feed themselves.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Below are ideas to help your child learn to eat/drink on his or her own:

- Encourage using both hands by putting your child's hands on the bottle or cup.
- Place finger foods in an ice cube tray. Your child will learn to pinch fingers together and get it out.
- Get messy! Place the child in the highchair in nothing but a diaper. Give them a spoon and let them explore.
- Practice scooping cheerios from one bowl to another.
- Make play doh into a pancake. Use plastic utensils to cut the play doh into pieces. Stab the play doh with a fork and move it to a plate.
- Have the child scoop and pour water with a cup during bath time. Pretend to bathe a doll. Rinse off the doll by pouring a glass of water on it.

Reference: Pre-Feeding Skills, [A Comprehensive Resource for Feeding Development](#) by Suzanne Evans Morris, Ph.D., CCC and Marsha Dunn Klein, M.Ed., O.T.R



**I have a copy of these home instructions, know what I need to do, and understand why they are important.**