



ORAL MOTOR & FEEDING MILESTONES

Birth - 6 months

birth - 3 months

Summary Skills:

- * Nasal breathing pattern at rest
- * Organized suck-swallow-breathe pattern
- * Rooting reflex present
- * Adequate lip seal on nipple
- * Tongue/jaw work together to take milk/formula
- * Baby eats in a relaxed, flexed position with chin slightly tilted down

Red Flags

- ▶ Mouth breathing at rest
- ▶ Poor latch
- ▶ Fussy while eating
- ▶ Shallow suck/clicking noises
- ▶ Excessive drooling
- ▶ Coughing or choking

Feeding Time!

Feeding your baby should be done in a relaxed manner as much as possible. Guiding their body into a flexed position and encouraging them to find their pace with sucking, swallowing and breathing. If you are nursing, this will be discovered by the baby. If you are bottle feeding, you may need to “pace” the feeding so that there are suck bursts, followed by lowering the nipple (don’t break the latch) and allowing breath and allowing baby to initiate the suck as ready.

Skills Checklist

- Nasal breathing pattern - tongue inside mouth, lips closed at rest
- Organized suck-swallow-breathe on nipple
- Adequate latch on bottle or breast
- Lips sealed while sucking - not “losing” a lot of fluid out sides of mouth
- No coughing or choking during eating
- Breathing is even and relaxed while eating
- Baby comfortable in flexed position
- Fading pacifier dependence by 2 months
- Pacifier shape should be rounded and similar to shape of the nipple
- Improving head control helping to stabilize jaw for introduction of solids
- Choose rounded nipples rather than orthodontic

Coming Soon

- ▶ More mature sucking pattern
- ▶ Introduction of solids
- ▶ Tongue making differing sounds
- ▶ Mouthing of toys increases

3-6 months

Summary Skills:

- * More mature sucking pattern, can suck from a spoon
- * Tongue may protrude slightly when swallowing solids
- * Spoon presented horizontally and lips lightly close to “suck” puree initially from spoon.
- * Increased lip and cheek activity while sucking

Red Flags

- ▶ Open mouth resting posture
- ▶ Rooting reflex remains at 6 months
- ▶ Coughing or choking
- ▶ Excessive drooling
- ▶ Limited lip movement to retrieve from spoon

Feeding Time!

Feeding baby as they get older will require greater stabilization throughout their body. When presenting solids, their feet/legs need to be on a firm surface, not dangling. The need to be able to hold their head up independently. Let them explore textures and introduce chewing on orally appropriate toys.

Skills Checklist

- Closed mouth resting posture
- Can take puree from a spoon
- Starting to use lips and tongue to make differing sounds: b, p, m, t, d, k, g
- Babbling with reduplicated syllables
- Interested and anticipates food with excitement
- Reaches for food
- Increased differentiation of cheek and lip muscles - improved tone and use of those muscles
- Weaned from pacifier completely
- Showing anticipation for receiving food
- Munching pattern emerges
- Enjoys mouthing toys
- Can bring toys to midline to chew

Coming Soon

- ▶ Many different sounds emerging using tongue in front, mid and back of mouth
- ▶ Offering puree and soft solids

Family Tree Therapies