

# Feeding Our Youngest

## 10 Months

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Last month, we talked about finger foods — a great way for your child to learn about the texture and tastes of new foods, build those self-feeding skills, and experience the satisfaction of moving food into her own mouth! Finger foods are an important and practical step in baby’s development, but spoon feeding is another valuable skill she is learning.

We mentioned back in month six that your baby might accept feeding better if she had a spoon to “work with.” By now, she is probably trying hard to spoon food to her mouth — and this may be trying your patience. Take comfort in the fact that most babies don’t become really good with a spoon until after their first birthday, and you are helping her improve her motor skills. You will probably become skilled at “taking turns” with your baby — she will feed herself a spoonful, and if she isn’t too independent, she may let you offer a spoonful too.

If you haven’t already, have your child join the rest of the family at the table. At this age they enjoy being part of family mealtime. When offering foods from the table, make sure they are nutritious, small enough for baby to pick up, and soft enough for baby to chew. A healthy plate contains fruits, vegetables, protein (tender meat, poultry, fish, or legumes), and grains (fortified cereal, pasta, or bread).

While it is important that your baby has soft, moist food as she works to master table food, be sure any protein food is thoroughly cooked. Cook



meats, poultry, and eggs until well done, because babies are particularly likely to become ill from eating undercooked protein foods.

Continue to offer a variety of new foods and textures to your child — you’re helping her become a capable, competent eater for life. While you are working to advance your baby’s diet, remember that she is working hard to master these new skills. Take a moment to praise those efforts — even if the process gets messy at times.

### Building Blocks: Praise the Progress



- Be patient! The mess is actually progress.
- Expect baby’s tastes to change. If a food is refused, offer it a few days later.
- Show baby what you want her to learn. Use a cup or spoon and enjoy food!

- Expect cup drinking to be “leaky” — especially at first.
- Praise your youngest for even small successes!

Have you noticed how we’ve gone back and forth between “baby” and “child” in this month’s newsletter? It fits, doesn’t it? Your baby is moving toward the toddler stage and is gradually leaving behind many of the baby feeding and developmental traits he had. At the same time, he may try a new skill, then resort to familiar methods. Your patience, support, and good humor will help your child move smoothly into toddlerhood.

Next month, we’ll talk about weaning.

**Until then, best wishes in the feeding of your youngest!**



## Reference

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/people-at-risk/children-under-five>

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