



**Royal Society for Blind Children**

# Supporting your baby with weaning

When it comes to weaning and learning to eat independently there are lots of ways you can support your baby. If your baby has some additional needs, you may already be getting advice from a speech and language therapist, and your health visitor can provide support regarding appropriate types of foods to try.

You may need to introduce the change from breast or bottle to food gently and your baby will need a little extra help for them to understand what to do when it comes to eating food.

## Equipment

Getting the right equipment will make your weaning journey easier:

- Use a highchair with a tray to contain food and make items easier to find.
- Use a non-slip mat so bowls and cups don't move around.
- Use a high contrast mat and bowl to make things easier to see.
- Use bowls with deep sides to make it easier to scoop food.

## Getting started

- Give mealtime cues: give your baby a spoon to hold, put their bib on or pop them in their highchair. Keep this the same for the start of every mealtime so your baby knows what to expect.
- Always provide forewarning of what is going to happen, so they are prepared; tell them what you are doing, so they also learn what to do.
- Let your baby play with a spoon whilst you feed them.
- Encourage them to have their hand on your arm so they can feel the action of you feeding them, this will help them learn what they need to do.
- Let them feel your jaw moving if you are eating and chewing and let them listen to you eating crunchy foods. This will help develop an understanding of the concept of chewing and eating.

## Moving towards independence

When working on developing independent eating skills it is easier to practice when your baby is motivated, but not overly hungry. Take the edge off your baby's hunger and reduce their frustration by feeding them the first few mouthfuls of their meal, before encouraging them to take over.

- Encourage your baby to hold the spoon. Place your hand over the top and guide the spoon between their food and their mouth.
- Try sitting behind your baby and helping them guide the spoon to their mouth.
- As your baby starts to understand that the spoon goes from the bowl to their mouth, try loading the spoon for them and then letting them take it to feed themselves.

Our Families First team of family practitioners are here to support you through your child's early years and into the future.

## RSBC can help you with:

- practical advice about your child's development
- support when you feel overwhelmed.
- understanding your child's vision impairment better
- living as a family and being supportive of each other

Call 020 3198 0225 or email [connections@rsbc.org.uk](mailto:connections@rsbc.org.uk)

