



Make the Next Bite Easier

Acknowledge your baby's reluctance, follow their cues, and help them return to feeding with a sense of safety and enjoyment.

Helps Your Child Grow



Emotional Functioning

Your patient response and warm acceptance show your baby that their feelings are understood and make emotional expression feel safe.



Communicating and Speaking

When you notice your baby's signals, put them into words, and wait for a response, your baby experiences the rhythm of back-and-forth communication.



What You'll Need



Feeding Routine

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1. A familiar feeding routine and the food already planned for it



Pause and Notice

When your baby resists food, pause and consider whether they are very hungry, tired, full, or uncomfortable with the texture. Even if you feel frustrated, use a steady voice and gentle expression to show that you understand.

Observations

- Cries loudly to signal that they do not want more food
- Looks toward you for comfort

Tips

- A gentle response makes feeding more likely to feel like a pleasant interaction than a pressured task.
- Crying during a meal does not necessarily mean your baby is refusing food. It may communicate an emotion, fullness, or physical discomfort.
- Being able to signal discomfort and receive a response helps your baby build trust in a caregiver.
- When you respond with acceptance and empathy, your baby has a secure setting in which to release strong feelings.



Put the Feeling into Words

Put your baby's emotion into words so they know you understand. Use their expression and movements as clues to what they may want, then make one small adjustment, such as offering a different flavor. Watch the response and keep following their cues.

Observations

- Gradually settles as you comfort them
- Looks intently at you while you speak

Tips

- Your baby cannot explain the reason yet, but expressions and movements can still communicate discomfort or preference.
- A frown, tongue thrust, or brief refusal can be a normal first response to an unfamiliar flavor.
- Frequent yawning or eye rubbing may mean your baby is tired.



End the Meal Positively

If your baby is not ready for the new flavor, stop offering it and try again another time. Let them finish with a familiar food. When they eat comfortably, stay engaged so the meal ends with a warm exchange.

Observations

- Smiles toward you after settling
- Shows enjoyment after tasting a familiar food

Tips

- At the next tasting, opening for even one bite is a meaningful beginning.
- A calm ending helps your baby return to a settled state and leaves the feeding interaction on a positive note.
- Enjoyable interaction supports your baby's trust and makes it easier to communicate feelings and preferences.
- When your baby is relaxed, a simple "We can try that food again another day" keeps future tasting connected with a calm experience.