

# NUTRITION TIDBITS FOR TEACHERS

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## Starting Infants on Solid Foods

- 1) **An infant isn't ready for solids until they show all the signs. Signs of readiness are:**
- Can sit up mostly unassisted.
  - Has good head control.
  - Opens mouth when spoon is offered.
  - Keeps food in the mouth instead of pushing it out with the tongue.

- 2) **If an infant doesn't have all the signs of readiness, wait a few days and try again.**
- Things change fast at this age!



- 3) **The best first food is infant cereal.** It can be mixed with breastmilk or formula, which gives it a familiar taste. It can be made very thin for first feeds. It is high in iron and zinc, which are two nutrients that children at this age are not getting enough of. If an infant cannot have infant cereal, offer pureed meats. Meats are hypoallergenic and good sources of iron and zinc.
- 4) **Keep an eye out for allergies.** After infant cereal is tolerated, start out serving single foods like plain pureed meats, fruits or vegetables. Wait 2 days before introducing new foods so that you can see if a food causes an allergic reaction. Reactions include: rash on skin (usually face, tummy, or hands), diarrhea and vomiting. Severe reactions include difficulty breathing and passing out. Keep in close communication with parents about what foods they have tried at home. Many daycares wait to start new foods until the parent has tried them at home.



- 5) **Don't confuse funny faces with picky eating.** Keep offering new foods, even if an infant spits it out. Repeated exposure will help infants learn to like a wide variety of foods.

- 6) **Keep offering new textures.** Don't keep infants on pureed foods too long, slowly advance to mashed and lumpy foods. Allow for self-feeding as soon as a child is interested. This prevents picky-eating and helps in development of oral skills.

- 7) **CACFP requirements: Age 6 months - 1 year breakfast, lunch and dinner:** 0-4 Tablespoons infant cereal or other protein food (like meat, beans, yogurt, cottage cheese) + 0-2 Tablespoons fruit, vegetable or both. **Snack:** 0-4 Tablespoons infant cereal or crackers/bread + 0-2 Tablespoons fruit, vegetable or both.