



## INFANT FEEDING: BIRTH TO 12 MONTHS

- An upright position while supporting the head and neck can improve **safety & performance**
- Collaborate with your baby's healthcare providers to explore ideal **bottle variations**:
  - Base widths
  - Nipple lengths
  - Vented nipples
  - Flow rate
  - One-way valves
  - Pliable bottles

Use your phone to scan the QR code for a general guideline of **Feeding Developmental Milestones** (4-36 months)



\*\*Each child has their own developmental timeline. Consult your healthcare providers with concerns.



## INTERESTED IN A FEEDING EVALUATION?

### *For new patients:*

1. Obtain a referral from your child's physician
2. Go to our website: [www.ivyrehab.com](http://www.ivyrehab.com)
3. Scroll down to "Pediatric Therapy"
4. Click "Find a Location"
5. Enter your zip code or address
6. Give us a call or click "Request Appointment"



### **Glen Allen Clinic:**

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**Ivy Rehab for Kids**  
Speech, Occupational, & Physical Therapy



## Ivy Rehab for Kids



### A FAMILY EDUCATION EVENT

Strategies & resources to help  
your child with feeding  
challenges



## PLAY & SENSORY-BASED FEEDING

The initial goal is food EXPLORATION! It's okay if they do not swallow or even put the new food in their mouth.

- Encourage food play—be **messy!**
- Begin with familiar foods then **gradually** shift to new foods, changing one element at a time (shape, texture, taste, temperature, color)
- Have a way out: **“bye, bye bowl”**
- **Calm** the nervous system before mealtime through heavy work
  - Pushing/pulling the laundry basket, carrying groceries in, loading/unloading the dishwasher

### Sensory Hierarchy:

look → smell → touch → kiss  
→ lick → bite → chew → swallow

## ORAL MOTOR

**Potential concerns:** fatigue with chewing, gagging, food or liquid spilling out of mouth, pocketing food in sides of mouth, drooling

Age (months)	Food Qualities	Examples
0-4 mo	Liquid	Milk only
~4-6 mo	Does <b>not</b> require chewing	Thin progressing to thick baby food, apple sauce
~6 mo	Similar to above, may be <b>more lumpy</b>	Purees
~8 mo	Long <b>rod-shaped</b> foods they can <b>hold</b> without breaking	Long peeled carrot sticks, raw celery sticks, bell pepper strips, pineapple core
~9 mo	Solids that <b>melt</b> without chewing	Yogurt melts
~10 mo	Turns into <b>mush</b> with <b>pressure</b> (gumming)	Saltine crackers, puffs
~11 mo	<b>Mashed</b> then swallowed with <b>minimal</b> chewing	Cut into small cubes or strips: sweet potato, avocado, banana
12-14 mo	Foods that contain <b>1+ texture</b>	Soups, yogurt with fruit
12-14 mo	<b>Most</b> foods except hard mechanicals	Steamed veggies, hard boiled eggs, tender meat
16-18 mo	Foods that require <b>rotary</b> chew	Tough meat, raw fruits/veggies, nuts

Oral motor exercises:

- Blow bubbles
- Blow through variously sized straws
- Tongue painting with yogurt

## ENVIRONMENT & MATERIALS

### Safe Environment

- The child should help set up the plate and choose food items
- Quiet area with limited distractions



### Routine

- Structure consistent mealtime routines & expectations to decrease anxiety



### Positioning

- Supportive backrest
- Appropriate table height
- Adding a box under the feet if their legs swing



### Materials

- Smaller spoons and forks
- Plates and bowls with raised edges for scooping
- Variously sized straws

