Mealtime with your little one can be an adventure. Here are some tips and ideas to help inspire positive mealtimes, create memories, and help your child learn.

**Is your baby ready for complementary foods?**

All babies are different—typically between 4-6 months they're ready to start trying complementary foods.

Signs that your baby is ready include:

- Able to control head and neck
- Sitting up alone or with support
- Bringing objects to the mouth
- Trying to grasp small objects, such as toys or food
- Swallowing food rather than pushing it back out onto their chin

**Meal ideas for your toddler**

1. **At one year old, growth may slow down a bit and your toddler’s appetite might as well.**
2. **Toddlers still need to try foods 8-10 times to get used to new flavors and textures.**
3. **Toddlers are great at knowing when they are full and ready to stop eating.** Let them make this choice.
4. **Plant and animal foods provide nutrients that support your toddler’s growth.** Be sure to talk to a doctor or dietitian if you choose not to offer a food group to your little one.
5. **You can make every sip count by offering plain whole milk and water.** Avoid plant-based milk.

**Learning is messy**

Playing with food is how your toddler learns to eat. Be ready for spills and cleanup by having towels and wipes handy.

**Positive mealtime**

Make it fun by talking with your little one about their food or create a smiley face with a string cheese smile, berry eyes and a green bean nose.

**Eating together**

Toddlers learn by watching. Set a great example by enjoying good-for-you foods together.

**Snack ideas**

- yogurt & berries
- cheese & crackers
- hummus & cucumber
- banana slices & peanut butter
- steamed broccoli & cheddar

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Your baby can now enjoy real dairy foods like yogurt, cheese, and cottage cheese, but wait to introduce cow’s milk until 12 months old.

Babies only have room for a little bit of food at a time, let them stop eating when they choose.

To prevent choking, avoid foods like grapes, whole nuts, and raw fruits or raw vegetables.

When offering new foods, limit to one new food at a time to watch for sensitivities or allergies.

Your baby is learning every step of the way, even the messy ones.

### Trying new textures
As your baby learns to chew, different food textures can gradually be introduced. Babies need to try foods 8-10 times to get used to new flavors and textures.

**PUREED ➔ SMASHED ➔ CHOPPED ➔ BITES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dairy</th>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Grains</th>
<th>Protein</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/4 TO 1/2 CUP DAILY</td>
<td>1/8 TO 1/2 CUP DAILY</td>
<td>1/8 TO 1/2 CUP DAILY</td>
<td>1/2 TO 1 OZ DAILY</td>
<td>3/4 TO 3 OZ DAILY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Babies may eat more or less and that is okay. Breast milk and formula still lead the way. Offer foods from each food group spread throughout the day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cottage Cheese</th>
<th>Banana</th>
<th>Broccoli</th>
<th>Bread</th>
<th>Beans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shredded Cheese</td>
<td>Raspberries</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Baby Cereal</td>
<td>Salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String Cheese</td>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Cooked Brown Rice</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt</td>
<td>Kiwi</td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>Cooked Pasta</td>
<td>Smooth Peanut Butter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
Dietary Guidelines for Americans: https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/
American Academy of Pediatrics: https://www.aap.org