



Good nutrition is essential to the rapid growth and development that occurs during a baby's first year. Providing babies with the right foods will promote good health and give them the opportunity to enjoy new tastes and textures as they establish good eating habits. Also, feeding can help babies establish warm relationships with their parents and caregivers. Positive and supportive feeding techniques are essential in allowing babies to eat well and to develop healthy attitudes toward themselves and others.

During the first year, babies' mouths develop from being able only to suck and swallow to being able to chew. Their digestive tracts mature from being able to take in only liquids, such as breastmilk or formula, to being able to receive a wide variety of foods. And at the same time, they progress from needing to be fed toward feeding themselves. As babies continually mature, their food and feeding patterns must continue to change.

This guide will help you appropriately feed the babies in your care as they change and develop. It answers some of the common questions on infant development, nutrition for babies, feeding practices, food preparation, safe food handling, and choking prevention.

The parents will also give you important information to help you in feeding their babies. **You should communicate frequently with them so that you can coordinate what the babies are being fed at home with what you feed them while in your care.** In this way you can assure the best care for the babies.