



Toddler Feeding Behaviors

Each child grows and changes at their own pace. This handout lists eating behaviors shown by toddlers around different ages.

Age	Your child might...	Your child can...
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Be easily distracted * Have a smaller appetite as growth slows * Develop food likes and dislikes * Stop eating foods he or she used to like * Be very messy * Eat very different amounts and types of food from day to day * Only be willing to sit at the table for a short time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use a spoon easily * Drink from an open cup without help * Start to tell you when he or she is hungry and full * Help put fruits and vegetables in bags at the grocery store * Put food in the shopping cart * Pour ingredients a bowl * Stir batter with help * Follow simple commands like "Please use your napkin" * Toss empty packages into the trash
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Start to ask for favorite foods * Like to pretend to cook * Stop liking foods they used to like * Join in talk during family meals * Be willing to sit at the table longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pour drinks with help * Use a fork and spoon easily * Make simple food choices, like choose between an apple and orange * Help wash fruits and veggies * Peel bananas and oranges with help * Help put dishes in the sink after meals
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Change food preferences based on what their friends, brothers or sisters like or what they see on TV * Dislike many mixed dishes * Be easily distracted while eating * Suddenly say no to foods they used to like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use table manners * Help pick recipes * Help put food from shopping cart to checkout counter * Get ingredients from lower cabinets * Put toppings on pizza or ingredients in a bowl * Fill pitchers or glasses with ice using a scoop
5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Change food preferences based on what their friends, brothers or sisters like or what they see on TV * Usually accept the foods that are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Help pick out food at the store * Stir batters * Measure ingredients * Scoop batter into muffin tins for baking * Mash foods like bananas or potatoes * Help set the table