INTRODUCING SOLIDS Baby-led weaning

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Readiness for solids - how do we know?

- u The book says so
- Weight gain slows
- Baby appears hungry
 - waking at night?
 - watching parents eating?
- Everyone else is doing it



Naylor and Morrow, 2001

reviewed the relevant literature concerning babies':

- Immunological development
- Gastrointestinal development
- Oral motor development

Here's another fine mess...

What about ...

u reliable signs of readiness?

u getting started?

u the 'window of opportunity'?

The critical period for learning

Illingworth and Lister, 1964

- The introduction of a specific stimulus at an appropriate time permits a milestone of development to occur
- The critical or sensitive period (for the development of any skill) is intimately related to maturation
- Restriction of practice inhibits skill development

The critical period in infant feeding Illingworth and Lister, 1964

- Babies should be given solid foods shortly after they have begun to chew
- The average age at which a child begins to chew is 6 months
- Babies begin to chew shortly after they have begun to reach out for objects and get them

Getting started

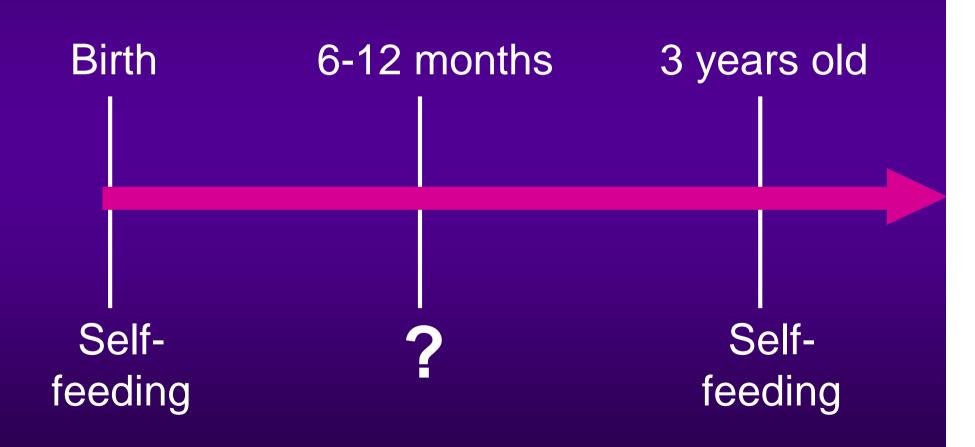
- Babies of six months can chew
- Babies who can chew don't need sloppy food
- Lack of opportunity to practise chewing may hinder development of this skill

The self-feeding continuum



Self-feeding begins at birth

The self-feeding continuum and the 'introduction' of solids



Signs of readiness

- u 26 weeks?
- Developmental clues:
 - Beginning to sit alone
 - Able to reach and grab
 - Taking everything to his mouth
 - Making consonant sounds

Let the baby lead the way

(Or: Never mind

the window . . .

what about the

opportunity?)



What we observed

- At 4 months, the babies weren't ready to feed themselves
- At around 6 months, they:
 - were able to get food into their mouths
 - were beginning to eat purposefully
 - u liked to explore their food
 - u didn't seem to need teeth

And by 9 months . . .

The babies:

- were effective self-feeders
- u appeared more dextrous than their peers
- u enjoyed mealtimes no food refusal
- u liked to choose what to eat, and in what order
- u tended to dislike being spoon-fed
- were beginning to manage spoons on their own

What the mothers said

- They all think I'm a bit weird!
- She really seems to enjoy eating.
- I didn't expect him to be eating raisins.
- Everyone's really jealous now!
- u I'll definitely do this with my next baby.

Things to consider

- u It can be messy!
- What about choking?
- u Can bottle-fed babies do this?
- Ensuring adequate nutrition
- Parents need to adopt the whole approach

Implementing a selffeeding approach

- Aim for shared mealtimes
- u Sit the baby up
- Offer fist-sized pieces
- Allow play/exploration
- Continue to breastfeed on demand
- Let the baby stay in control

It's so much better!

- No need for pureed foods
- The whole process is simpler
- Babies enjoy a wider range of foods
- Babies' skill development is enhanced
- u All the family can eat together

Is there another way?

Introduce the baby to the solids not the solids (in)to the baby!