1-2-3 Years Milestones
Article

Learning to Self-Feed

MAY 26, 2022

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Before you know it, your child is going to start reaching for your food and her eyes will start following your utensil movements. That's how she mentally preps to start feeding herself. It's an exciting time, and the first step is when she's ready to sit up comfortably and confidently on her own. After that, she will start using her thumb and her index finger to start grabbing things and feeding herself. That skill alone will continue to improve over the next few years, and develop into a skill that she will use to write legibly, use a computer, turn pages, and brush her hair and teeth.

By the time she is 13 to 15 months, she will learn to use a spoon, and by 18 months, she will start using utensils more efficiently. It will be a mess throughout (expect messing eating until she's about 3 years old, at least), but that mess is actually a way for her to learn the basics of eating.

Once your child starts to eat alone, she responds to natural cues for hunger and fullness, so it will reduce the stress on your end to see if your child has eaten enough or not.

When it comes to what's in her plate, start off with small and soft things, like pasta and cooked veggies. Once she has mastered those, you can add some thicker foods like yogurt and mashed potatoes. Avoid grapes, peanuts, popcorn, and other small food items like that to avoid choking hazards.

Mealtimes might seem to last forever, and there might end up being more food on the floor than in her stomach, but it is important to be patient throughout, letting her master self-feeding. (TIP: To avoid her getting frustrated and giving up, make sure that you don't space out feeding times too much, so she's not too hungry or tired.)

Reference:

http://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/growth/when-do-toddlers-self-feed/