

What is responsive feeding?

Responsive feeding is a practice that involves **recognizing and responding to** a child's **hunger and fullness** cues. In babies, these cues include facial expressions, body movements, and sounds.

Babies show they're **hungry** by:

- turning their head from side to side
- sucking on their hands
- bringing their arms and legs close to their body
- increasing their movements



Babies show they're **full** by:

- turning their head away from their food
- closing their mouth
- relaxing their arms and legs
- closing their eyes
- falling asleep



If babies are **very hungry**, they may:

- become very upset
- start crying



Feeding babies before these cues can help avoid a frantic or fussy feed.

If babies are **offered food when they are full**, they may:

- push their caregiver away
- become very upset
- start crying



Why does responsive feeding matter?

During the first year of life, **babies experience many changes to their appetite.**

They may want to eat more or less based on their growth spurts.

Feeding according to babies' hunger and fullness cues, rather than a schedule, helps satisfy their ever-changing needs.

Babies who are fed responsively **learn to follow their own hunger and fullness signals.** These behaviours can help **support healthy eating** throughout the child's life.

Responsive feeding also helps **promote bonding** between babies and caregivers. When caregivers respond to babies' cues, babies learn that their needs can be met. This helps them feel safe and **develop a trusting relationship** with their caregivers.

