

# RESPONSIVE BOTTLE FEEDING

## What is Responsive Feeding?

Responsive feeding is a best practice recommended by the AAP and other experts. The term can be applied to bottle feeding, breastfeeding, or feeding of solid foods. The benefits of responsive feeding include:

- Helps the child develop healthy eating habits by learning how to self-regulate their nutritional intake and setting their own pace for feeding.
- Decreases overfeeding, gas, stomach discomfort, and spitting up in bottle-fed infants.
- Develops trust with you when you respond to their hunger or fullness feeding cues.
- May lower child's risk of becoming overweight as they get older because of learning how to self-regulate their nutritional intake and listening to satiety/fullness cues.
- The upright position when responsive feeding can help reduce ear infections.

## How to Practice Responsive Bottle Feeding

- Feed infants when they show early signs of hunger
- Hold infants upright at a 45-90-degree angle
- Brush the nipple on infant's lips and wait for them to open their mouth and latch on. Never force the bottle into their mouth.
- Hold the bottle just high enough to prevent the infant from swallowing air, so the nipple is filled with milk.
- Every few sucks, offer the infant a break for a few seconds until they are trying to latch again. Some infants may need more breaks or less breaks than others. The goal is to let the infant set the pace for the feeding and allow them to take breaks when they want to. This requires you to closely watch the infant's behavior during feeding.
- Stop feeding when infant shows signs of fullness. Do not force them to finish the bottle.

## Infant Hunger Signs

- Keeps hands near mouth
- Hands in tight fists

- Bends arms and legs toward body
- Makes sucking noises/movements
- Puckers lips
- Searches for nipple (roots)
- Crying is a LATE sign of hunger. Crying infants should be calmed down before starting to feed.

### **Infant Fullness (Satiated) Signs**

- Sucks slower or stops sucking
- Relaxes hands and arms
- Turns away from nipple or refuses to open mouth
- Pushes away
- Falls asleep