

Eating and Drinking Stages – General Strategies

- Sit on chair at a table; ensure your child's chair is at a good height and their feet are supported. Also ensure their elbows are resting comfortably, allowing easy forearm movement across the table surface.
- Angle of hips, knees, ankles and elbows should be at 90°
- Reduce any distraction in the eating area, and encourage your child with prompts and praise.
- Try using a non-slip Dycem mat under the plate or even on the seat - helps keep things still.

Drinking:

- Encourage child to hold their bottle with both hands
- Hold a cup with both hands, use hand over guidance to steady the cup
- Try beakers with different tops e.g. sunken lid with small hole (tommee tippee first cups)
- Use of beakers with 2 handles (2 years)
- Progress to beakers with one handle, the dominant hand to hold the cup and other hand to support the cup



Eating:

- Take finger foods to mouth e.g. bread sticks.
- Child holds a spoon while you are feeding them
- Role play feeding dolly or teddy
- Use cutlery with thick handles that assist your child's grip e.g. junior caring cutlery or foam grip
- Use hand over hand guidance to help them use the spoon
- Child practices using the spoon for some of the meal, you help with the rest
- Progress to use of fork, stab the food with fork and take it to mouth
- Progress to knife and fork: Practice using the knife to cut the food whilst the fork stabilises it.
- Practice knife cutting regularly with easy foods like bananas or even playdough.

