



Indiana Association for Infant & Toddler Mental Health

Many parents worry about whether their toddlers are eating enough and eating the right things. Reduced intake and increased pickiness about food coupled with the desire for independence that happens near the second year are typical for toddlers. Even so, these behaviors can frustrate parents and may lead to unpleasant struggles at mealtime. It is helpful for families to know what behaviors are expected and which require more intervention. First Steps mental health professionals can help with healthy eating!



Facts to know about eating habits and needs of the typical toddler:

- * Fewer calories are needed after age 2 years, so expect children to eat less.
- * Offer appropriate portions: 1/2 cup of milk; 1/4 cup of cereal or pasta.
- * Don't restrict fats: toddlers need 30 to 40% of total calories from fat.
- * Consider safety and readiness when deciding what foods to offer.
- * Be a good model: eat a variety of foods yourself!
- * Offer 3 meals and 2 healthy snacks each day!
- * Go to aap.org for helpful tips about children's diet.

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1431 North Delaware St
Indianapolis, IN 46202

**First Steps providers can help families learn to help
their babies and toddlers with feeding!**

www.iaitmh.org
E-mail: info@iaitmh.org