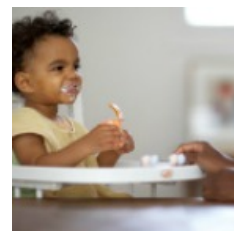




# What Caregivers Need to Know About Feeding Children

Parents should provide caregivers with specific instructions about feeding children—not only about what to serve but also when, where, and how. Most new teenaged caregivers (</English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Babysitting-Jobs.aspx>) and those new to the household need more details than extended-family members and the usual caregivers do. Parents may need to be tactful with older family members (</English/family-life/work-play/pages/A-Message-for-Grandparents-Who-Provide-Childcare.aspx>), as the practices they are comfortable with do not necessarily suit a new generation.



If you are leaving a picky eater (</English/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/Pages/Picky-Eaters.aspx>) in the care of a caregiver, pass on any necessary information out of the child's hearing and avoid giving overly detailed instructions. Many picky eaters will eat without a fuss when sharing a meal with other children or caregivers. The less attention paid to their demands, the easier meals can be.

## For Babies and Young Children

- If a new caregiver will be caring for babies (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/default.aspx>) and toddlers (</English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/default.aspx>), arrange a time before the actual date of care for the caregiver to visit your home during a meal to observe and help feed the children. In this way, the caregiver will be familiar with the routine before taking on the job alone, the children will be more comfortable with the caregiver, and the parents can be more confident that mealtimes will go smoothly.

## For Newborns and Infants

- If you are breastfeeding (</english/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/default.aspx>) and if you usually express and refrigerate breast milk for times when you must be away from your baby, show your caregiver how to properly warm and store (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Storing-and-Preparing-Expressed-Breast-Milk.aspx>) the bottles.
- For a bottle-fed (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/pages/Bottle-Feeding-How-It%27s-Done.aspx>) newborn or infant, mix and refrigerate several bottles of formula before going out.
- Show the caregiver how to warm a bottle (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/pages/Preparing-Sterilizing-and-Storing-Formula.aspx>) by standing it in a pitcher of warm water or placing the bottle under running, warm tap water, and how to flick a few drops on to the wrist to test that the temperature is no hotter than lukewarm. Remind the caregiver to mix the formula carefully to distribute the heat evenly.
- Warn the caregiver never to heat bottles in the microwave.

## For Toddlers and Older Children

- If the children's food (</english/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/Pages/default.aspx>) is already prepared and needs only to be heated, leave written instructions about oven temperatures and timing. Show the caregiver how to use the oven, microwave, and other appliances.
- When you expect the caregiver to prepare the meal, leave all the ingredients and utensils ready together with clear, written instructions.
- Let the caregiver know exactly what appropriate finger foods are and be clear about those that your child is still too young to manage.

If you prefer that your child not have cookies, candies, and other sugary foods, make sure the caregiver is aware of your concerns and provide other choices for treats.

## For Children With Special Needs

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- If your child has a chronic condition (</english/health-issues/conditions/chronic/Pages/default.aspx>) that requires a special diet, such as diabetes (</English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/pages/Diabetes.aspx>), cystic fibrosis (</English/health-issues/conditions/chronic/pages/Cystic-Fibrosis.aspx>), or gluten enteropathy (celiac disease (</English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/Celiac-Disease.aspx>)), provide written, step-by-step procedures for all meals and snacks. Also provide clear instructions about how to protect a child with cystic fibrosis against excessive salt loss and dehydration (</English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Dehydration.aspx>) in warm weather.
- Be sure to leave a list of permitted treats as well as a list of foods that the child absolutely cannot eat.
- If your child has diabetes, leave written instructions about the importance of regular meals and snacks (</English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Choosing-Healthy-Snacks.aspx>) and what foods may be eaten. Many people have the mistaken impression that children with diabetes can never eat sweets or candy. This is not so. While foods with added sugar should be consumed sparingly, they are not forbidden for diabetic children. Sweet foods have a place in a balanced and nutritious diet plan. In your written instructions, include a list of allowable exchanges and emphasize that any sugary food the child consumes must be included in the overall carbohydrate (</English/ages-stages/teen/nutrition/Pages/Carbohydrates-for-Energy.aspx>) allowance for a given meal or snack.
- In the case of food allergy (</English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Food-Allergies-in-Children.aspx>) or sensitivity in your child, go over the list of foods that must be avoided because they may contain the food or ingredient that causes the allergy but in hidden forms.
- To help the caregiver to be ready for problems and to be able to find help when necessary, write out a list of symptoms that may be related to food, such as vomiting (</English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/Treating-Vomiting.aspx>), diarrhea (</English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/Diarrhea.aspx>), wheezing (</English/tips-tools/Symptom-Checker/Pages/Wheezing-Other-Than-Asthma.aspx>), rash (</English/tips-tools/Symptom-Checker/Pages/Rash-Widespread-and-Cause-Unknown.aspx>), hives (</English/health-issues/conditions/skin/Pages/Hives.aspx>), swelling, and difficulty breathing.
- Leave the list of symptoms next to the numbers to call in case of emergency (pediatrician, Poison Help (</English/news/Pages/Tips-for-Poison-Prevention-and-Treatment.aspx>), 911 (</English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Calling-911-How-and-When-to-Call-for-Help.aspx>), close neighbor).

## For All Children

- Give the caregiver a written schedule of doses (</English/health-issues/conditions/treatments/pages/Fever-and-Pain-Medicines-Major-Change-Parents-Need-to-Know.aspx>) for any medicine your child must take while you are gone, including the times when the medicine should be taken.
- Make sure the caregiver knows how to deal with a choking infant and how to perform the Heimlich maneuver (</English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Responding-to-a-Choking-Emergency.aspx>) for an older child who is choking.

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.