

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: FEEDING

SCREENING CHECKLIST

Occupational therapists can use the checklist to screen a child aged birth to 3 years on their feeding skills. The checklist can be used to screen for services and provide additional information for evaluations.

There may be precautions and contraindications that may impact a client's feeding. You should include the precautions and contraindications in the designated comments section.

Child's Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____ **Age:** _____

Therapist: _____ **Date:** _____

Birth – 3 months

Skills	Yes	No
Coordinated suck-swallow-breathe pattern during breast and bottle feeds		
Latches onto a nipple or bottle		
Tongue moves forward and back to suck		
Diet is mostly liquids from either breast milk and/or formula		

Comments:

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3-6 months

Skills	Yes	No
Tongue and jaw move together		
Tongue used to move purees to back of mouth for the swallow		
Lateral (side to side) tongue movements		
Munching (up and down) jaw movements		
Lateral (side to side) jaw movements		
Opens mouth when spoon approaches or touches the lips		
Begins to eat smooth, pureed food		
Begins eating infant/meltable foods		

Comments:

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6-9 months

Skills	Yes	No
Holds bottle in hands to drink		
Consistent tongue lateralization when foods are presented to the sides of tongue		
Movements of foods from side of mouth to central tongue and back		
Diagonal rotary movements		
Sucks liquids from cups		
Begins to eat lumpy mashed and thicker pureed foods		
Enjoys chew toys during teething		
Begins to look and reach for foods that are nearby		

Comments:

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9-12 months

Skills	Yes	No
Begins to drink from different cups		
Introduction to using an open cup		
Begins to lick food off lips		
Simple tongue protrusions		
Sustained, controlled biting of food		
Full movements of foods from side to side in mouth with tongue		
Uses fingers to self-feed soft, chopped foods		
May begin to learn how to use eating utensils during mealtimes		
Ready to try eating a variety of foods, such as soft-cooked vegetables, soft fruits, and finger foods		
Enjoys a wider range of food smells and tastes		

Comments:

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1-1.5 years

Skills	Yes	No
Chews and swallows firmer foods without choking		
Chews foods that produce juice		
Keeps most bites of food in mouth when chewing		
Tongue tip elevation		
Holds cup with both hands to drink		
Parent feeds child some bites and child independently take bites		
Holds spoon with whole hand for self-feeding		
Begins to look and reach for foods that are nearby		

Comments:

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1.5-2 years

Skills	Yes	No
Refined rotary chewing patterns		
Refined lateral placement of foods		
Chews a wide range of textures		
Chews with mouth closed		
Chews bigger pieces of soft table foods		
Can pick up, dip, and bring foods to mouth		
Scoops pureed foods with spoon and brings to mouth with some spillage		
Uses fork to spear food and bring to mouth with some spillage		

Comments:

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2-3 years

Skills	Yes	No
Chews with lips closed		
Opens cup drinking minimal to no spillage		
Holds cup with one hand		
Eats the same foods as the rest of the family		
Feeds well with utensils		
Has definite food likes and dislikes & refuse certain foods		
Pours liquids into cup from a small container with some spills		
Wipes own mouth and hands with a napkin		

Comments:

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The design of the screening checklist was influenced by:

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2014). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain & process (3rd ed.). *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68(Suppl. 1), S1-S48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2014.682006>
- Carruth, B. R., Ziegler, P. J., Gordon, A., & Hendricks, K. (2004). Developmental milestones and self-feeding behaviors in infants and toddlers. *Journal of American Dietetic Association*, 104(1), 51-56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jada.2003.10.019>
- English, L. K., Obbagy, J. E., Wong, Y. P., Butte, N. F., Dewey, K. G., Fox, M. K., Greer, F. R., Krebs, N. F., Scanlon, K. S., & Stoddy, E. E. (2019). Complementary feeding and developmental milestones: A systematic review. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 109(7), 879-889. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/nqy321>
- Morris, S.E. & Dunn-Klein, M. (2000). *Pre-feeding skills: A comprehensive resource for mealtime development (2nd ed.)*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED, Inc.
- Overland, L. L., & Merkel-Walsh, R. (2013). *A sensory motor approach to feeding*. Charleston, SC: TalkTools.
- Pighetti, D., Hirschwald, J., & Gilheaney, O. (2020). Developmental feeding milestones in the transition from non-oral feeding to oral feeding in premature infants: A scoping review. *Speech, Language and Hearing*, 25(1), 82-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2050571X.2021.1985894>