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## **Self-Feeding: An essential milestone in the growth & development of your toddler**

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Isn't it a real joy to witness your child eating independently? Learning to self-feed is important for your growing toddler to ensure a healthy development process. If you can see your child attempting to self-feed by holding a spoon and swallowing food by themselves, then maybe it's time for you to encourage him/her to eat food on his/her own.

## Here is why:

- Self-feeding can provide a sense of control to your toddler. Once he/she starts feeding herself/himself, he/she will start to understand his/her taste preferences, and how much and what he/she likes to eat.
- He/she will also begin to comprehend his/her internal body cues that signal whether he/she is hungry or full.
- Learning to self-feed will make him/her independent and confident about his/her eating habits.

However, your child's training will be incomplete without your support and encouragement.



Below are a few healthy eating habits that will help your child in eating independently:

- Encourage your child to hold his/her own spoon and utensils whenever he/she tries to, irrespective of the mess that gets created.
- It is time for your toddler to explore his/her taste preferences. So let him/her be on the dining table. Ignore the mess, allow him/her to play with his/her food, and let him/her feed his/her own self.
- While learning to swallow food, your child might even choke a bit. Don't panic in such situations. Simply, pat him/her on his/her back lightly and let him/her swallow the bite slowly. However, you must avoid foods that may cause choking.
- Finger foods are great to help you train your toddler in self-feeding. Just make sure he/she don't stuff their mouth with food.
- Let your kid drink the milk from the glass on his/her own. If he/she doesn't like drinking plain milk, fortified flavoured milk drinks can be a good alternative too.

Practice the above techniques and nurture an independent, confident child.