BABY-LED WEANING:
A step-by-step guide to starting solids using a safe, practical, and natural alternative to spoon-feeding purees

Presented by Katie Ferraro, MPH, RDN, CDE
I BECAME OBSESSED WITH BABY-LED WEANING
TODAY’S PRESENTATION

1.) What is baby-led weaning

2.) Benefits of a baby-led approach to feeding

3.) How to start baby-led weaning
WHAT IS BABY-LED WEANING?
WHAT IS BABY-LED WEANING?

Baby-led weaning is a practical, safe, hands-on approach to starting solid foods.
WHAT IS BABY-LED WEANING?

Baby-led weaning is an alternative to spoon-feeding pureed food.
BLW is based on the premise that babies who feed themselves the wholesome foods provided by parents and caregivers:

...will accept a wider variety of foods
...may avoid picky eating down the road
...reduce risk of overweight and obesity
...have a healthier relationship with food
BABY-LED WEANING

...a centuries-old, natural approach to letting babies self-feed
BABY-LED WEANING

...a term coined by Gill Rapley, PhD, co-author of the Baby-Led Weaning book and champion of this philosophy
BABY-LED WEANING

...is as much (or more?) about

HOW you feed

as it is

WHAT you feed
BENEFITS OF A BABY-LED APPROACH
#1

THIS IS NOTHIN G NEW

Amy Bentley

Inventing Baby Food

Taste, Health, and the Industrialization of the American Diet

Bentley, 2014.
#2

PREVENT PICKY EATING

#3

HONORS
INBORN
ABILITIES

#4

SELF-PACED FEEDING
#5

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Rapley, 2010; Fernando & Potock, 2015.
#6 REDUCED RISK OF OBESITY
#7

AVOID NUTRIENT GAPS
#8

PROMOTES
FAMILY
MEALS
#9 EASY
#10 CHEAPER
#11

ALLERGY PROTECTION
#12

Does Not Increase Risk of Choking

IF BLW IS SO AMAZING...THEN WHY DOESN’T EVERYONE DO IT?
#1

FEAR OF CHOKING
CHOKING PREVENTION

Sit baby upright
Don’t put food in baby’s mouth
Minimize distractions
Offer appropriate foods
Let gagging go
#2

MESS AND WASTE
#3

TIME
#4 LACK OF SUPPORT
“I always wondered why babies spend so much time sucking their thumbs. Then I tasted baby food.”

-Robert Orben, Writer
“Spoon-feeding isn’t bad; it’s simply not necessary.”

-Gill Rapley, PhD
BALANCED BITES...
A SPACE FOR SPOONS
SPOON-FEEDING SOUNDOFF

1. Often begins too soon
2. Purees don’t resemble “real” foods
3. Spoon-feeding results in arbitrary portion sizes
SPOON-FEEDING SOUNDOFF

4. You remove baby’s control
HOW TO START BABY-LED WEANING
"Tell me about yourself. Are you on solids?"
BLW HOW-TO

#1

START FEEDING AT THE RIGHT TIME
WHY DOES THE 6-MONTH MARK MATTER?
Breastfeeding as sole source of nutrition for first 6 months

Continue breastfeeding with complementary foods until at least 12 months

May continue breastfeeding beyond 12 months
All infants should start receiving foods in addition to breast milk from 6 months onwards.
STARTING SOLIDS TOO EARLY CAN HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Introduction of solids prior to 4 months is associated with increased weight gain and adiposity, both in infancy and early childhood.
WAITING TOO LONG TO INTRODUCE SOLIDS CAN HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Delayed introduction of solid foods can negatively impact food acceptance later in childhood
LOOK FOR SIGNS YOUR BABY IS READY TO EAT
SIGNS YOUR BABY IS READY TO EAT

Baby is around 6 months of age

Sitting up on own relatively unassisted

Disappearance of the extrusion reflex (tongue thrust)

Interest in food, mouthing objects
CREATE A PEACEFUL EATING ENVIRONMENT
“LEAVE BEHIND experiences that may have been detrimental - such as not having family meals or a negative environment - and maintain those food experiences which bring happiness and joy, like your favorite meals and traditions.”

-Rachel Rothman, MS, RD, CLEC
HOW TO CREATE A PEACEFUL EATING ENVIRONMENT

1.) Put baby in a safe chair and get at his or her eye level
TRIPP TRAPP CHAIR BY STOKKE
POCKET SNACK BOOSTER BY CHICCO
PO P ‘N SIT BY SUMMER INFANT
HOW TO CREATE A PEACEFUL EATING ENVIRONMENT

Put baby in a **safe chair** and get at his or her eye level

Remove or minimize **distractions**

**Schedule** meals and snacks

**Sit with your baby** for meals
BLW HOW-TO

#3

STICK TO A SCHEDULE
“If you fail to plan... you plan to fail.”

-Benjamin Franklin
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

ALL INFANTS SHOULD RECEIVE FOOD IN ADDITION TO BREAST MILK FROM 6 MONTHS ONWARD

Food **2-3 times** per day between 6-8 months

Food **3-4 times** per day between 9-11 months

Food **3-4 times + 1-2 snacks** per day between 12-24 months
“Even an experienced 6-month-old may only eat about 3 to 4 tablespoons at a meal.”

—American Academy of Pediatrics
# Sample Schedule

## 6 Months Old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Food or Milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 am</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pm</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pm</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sample Schedule

### 9 Months Old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Food or Milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 am</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 am</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 pm</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pm</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Schedule

**12 Months Old**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Food or Milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 am</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 am</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 pm</td>
<td>Food and Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pm</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>Breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OFFER “BANG-FOR-YOUR BITE” FOODS
TRUE OR FALSE?

“Food before one is just for fun.”
EXAMPLES OF

“BANG FOR YOUR BITE” FOODS

Instead of boiled vegetables >>> roast vegetables with oil

Turn plain whole grains into farro, bulgur, or quinoa cakes or fritters

Try foods like avocado, salmon burgers, polenta, sweet potatoes

Offer high iron foods such as meat, fish and poultry
BLW HOW-TO

#5 KNOW YOUR FEEDING ROLE
ELLYN SATTER’S

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY IN FEEDING

Parents are responsible for **WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE** the baby eats

Babies ultimately determine **HOW MUCH** and **WHETHER** they eat
DONT GIVE UP!

A healthy 6-month old baby is **physiologically equipped** to handle **solid food**

It may take a baby **10-15 tries** over time before he or she will **accept a new food**
100 Foods for Your Baby to Try Before Turning One
Digital Course: A step-by-step guide to starting solids with baby-led weaning

www.blwrdcourse.com
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