



Child Development Service



Sitting well for eating and drinking

Sitting in a good position is important for children when eating and drinking. Well supported and stable sitting helps your child focus on:

- breathing
- chewing
- swallowing
- use of their hands to self-feed.

This makes eating and drinking safer, less tiring for your child and more comfortable.

Always watch your child when they are eating.

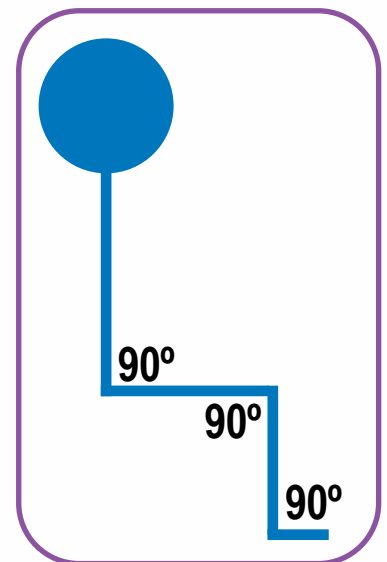
If you aren't sure if your baby is ready to start solid foods, talk to your child health nurse or doctor.

Tips for sitting well for eating and drinking

The best position for eating and drinking is seated in a booster seat, highchair, or chair, depending on your child's age. Aim for your child to have their hips, knees, and ankles as close to a 90° angle (a right angle) as possible with their:

- back tall and supported
- not leaning to one side or another
- feet on floor or on a support
- arms able to rest on a table or tray.

You can use ordinary items that you have at home to adjust your child's seating to help them to sit in this position. If you use items from around your home, they need to be sturdy and secure.



Look at how your child is seated at mealtimes and consider:

- **Are they sitting up straight and tall?**
 - A booster seat/highchair tray or the table top may help to stabilise their body.
 - For babies, you can add support by putting rolled towels on either side of them to prevent them from leaning sideways in their highchair. Before starting solids, it is important that your baby has good head and neck control and can sit up when supported.





- **Are their hips sitting back in the chair (90° angle) and their knees resting over the edge of the chair (90° angle)?**
 - If not, you could put a firm cushion or towel behind their hips and back for support and to bring them forward in their chair so they can bend their knees.
- **Are their feet supported by resting on a surface or footrest, or flat on the floor (90° angle)?**
 - If not, provide a secure base for them to rest their feet on. This will help them to sit upright.
 - You could put a folded towel, books, or a low step under their feet.

■ **Are their arms able to rest on the tray or the table?**

- If not, you can boost your child up in the seat by using a firm cushion, folded towel, or book under their bottom so that their elbows are at the same height as the table.

If you have any concerns about your child's eating or drinking, talk with your child health nurse or Child Development Service clinician.

Notes



For more information about the metropolitan **Child Development Service** scan the QR code, visit cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ChildDevelopment or phone [1300 551 827](tel:1300551827).



This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for people with disability.

This publication is provided for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed. Reproduced with permission from WA Country Health Service. Not to be edited without the permission of the author.
©State of Western Australia, Child and Adolescent Health Service. This version: November 2024

CAH-001776

