

# Ensuring that complementary feeding improves over time



Ministry of Women & Child Development  
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# How far have we come in ensuring complementary feeding?



**Read the questions and start the discussion**



**Use more questions to facilitate discussions:**

- Who are the children who get good Complementary Feeding?
- Who are the children who get inadequate Complementary Feeding?
- Are there mothers who have started adequate Complementary Feeding after being supported by us? What made them change?



**After completion of the discussion briefly tell them that:**



We are having this discussion as it is important to start complementary feeding along with breast feeding after 6 months for complete physical and mental development of the child.



5 Minute

M9

Improving Complementary Feeding

F1

# How far have we come in ensuring complementary feeding ?



- Are there more children in our villages who are now being given adequate Complementary Feeding?
- How can we measure this progress?





# Can we express child's complementary feeding in numbers?



Invite one of the participants to read each indicator in the first column. Then invite 5 participants, one after the other, and ask them to provide data on one indicator each. Also enquire about the number of children in their catchment area, of this age group. Ask-How many of them are being adequately fed?

Fill the numbers given by the participants in the table using the example given on the right.



## Tell everyone about the exercise

For the exercise, make it clear that there are simple rules:

- Refer to your home visit planner and answer.
- It is ok if you don't know the feeding status of a few children.

This is meant to be a discussion to understand the situation on the ground. We are going to try and learn from this discussion.

Ask for numbers from five randomly selected participants. After filling in these figures in the table, add up the numerators and the denominators and derive percentages.

## Then, ask

- How are the children doing?
- Do you think they are eating well?
- What are the things that the families are doing well and what are they not doing well?

Indicators		6 Month	7 Month	8 Month	9 Month
How many children are breastfed?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are fed the following things in a day other than rice, roti or milk? 1. Pulses 2. Yellow, orange vegetables 3. Green leafy vegetables 4. Protein rich food	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are being fed after washing hands?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are being fed in a separate bowl (Katori)?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are being fed adequately ?	Children				
	Total children				

[Example to derive percentage: If there are a total of 15 children of six months of age in 5 AWCs, and out of them 10 children are fed rice or roti daily then the percentage will be =  $10/15 \times 100 = 66.7$  percent.]



# Can we express child's complementary feeding in numbers?



## Results on complementary feeding practices of 6, 7, 8, 9 months children

Indicators		6 Month	7 Month	8 Month	9 Month
How many children are breastfed?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are fed following things in a day other than rice, roti or milk? 1.Pulses 2.Yellow, orange vegetables 3.Green leafy vegetables 4.Protein rich food	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are being fed after washing hands?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are being fed in a separate bowl (Katori)?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are being fed adequately?	Children				
	Total children				





# What are we supposed to do, to support complementary feeding?



Display the card.

Using the numbers in the previous table, explain to the participants that, it can be observed that few families are doing a few things right while feeding their children, but many families are still not doing things correctly.



Ask:

What are we supposed to do to support families who are not feeding their children correctly?

Then, invite the same 5 participants one by one to provide data on how many children they visited and supported. Fill the numbers given by the participants into the table using the example on the right.

After the numbers from the 5 participants are filled in, total up the numerators and denominators, and ask:

- How are we doing now?
- What have we done well?
- What have we not done well?



Discuss why some things have been done well, and why some things have not been done well.



At the end of the exercise, explain it to them that we will continue to discuss such details in the future sessions.

Indicators		6 Month	7 Month	8 Month	9 Month
How many families of such children have you visited in the last month?	Children				
	Total children				
In how many families did you ask what was cooked at home in the previous day?	Children				
	Total children				
In how many families did you ask what was fed to the child in the previous day?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are fed in a separate bowl (katori) ?	Children				
	Total children				
In how many families did you do a live demonstration using home cooked food?	Children				
	Total children				



15 Minute

M9

Improving Complementary Feeding

F3

# What are we supposed to do, to support complementary feeding?



Indicators		6 Month	7 Month	8 Month	9 Month
How many families of such children did you visit in the last month?	Children				
	Total children				
In how many families did you ask what was cooked at home the previous day?	Children				
	Total children				
In how many families did you ask what was fed to the child in the previous day?	Children				
	Total children				
How many children are fed in a separate bowl (katori) ?	Children				
	Total children				
In how many families did you do a live demonstration using home cooked food?	Children				
	Total children				





# How much food should a child eat ?



## Explain that ;

We had earlier learnt about the importance of starting complementary feeding at the age of six months, and about the importance of feeding a variety of foods. Today we will discuss the importance of the amount of food that a child should eat.



Display the card, ask participants to read the questions, respond, and let there be a discussion.

Record the responses of the participants in a notebook.



10 Minute

M9

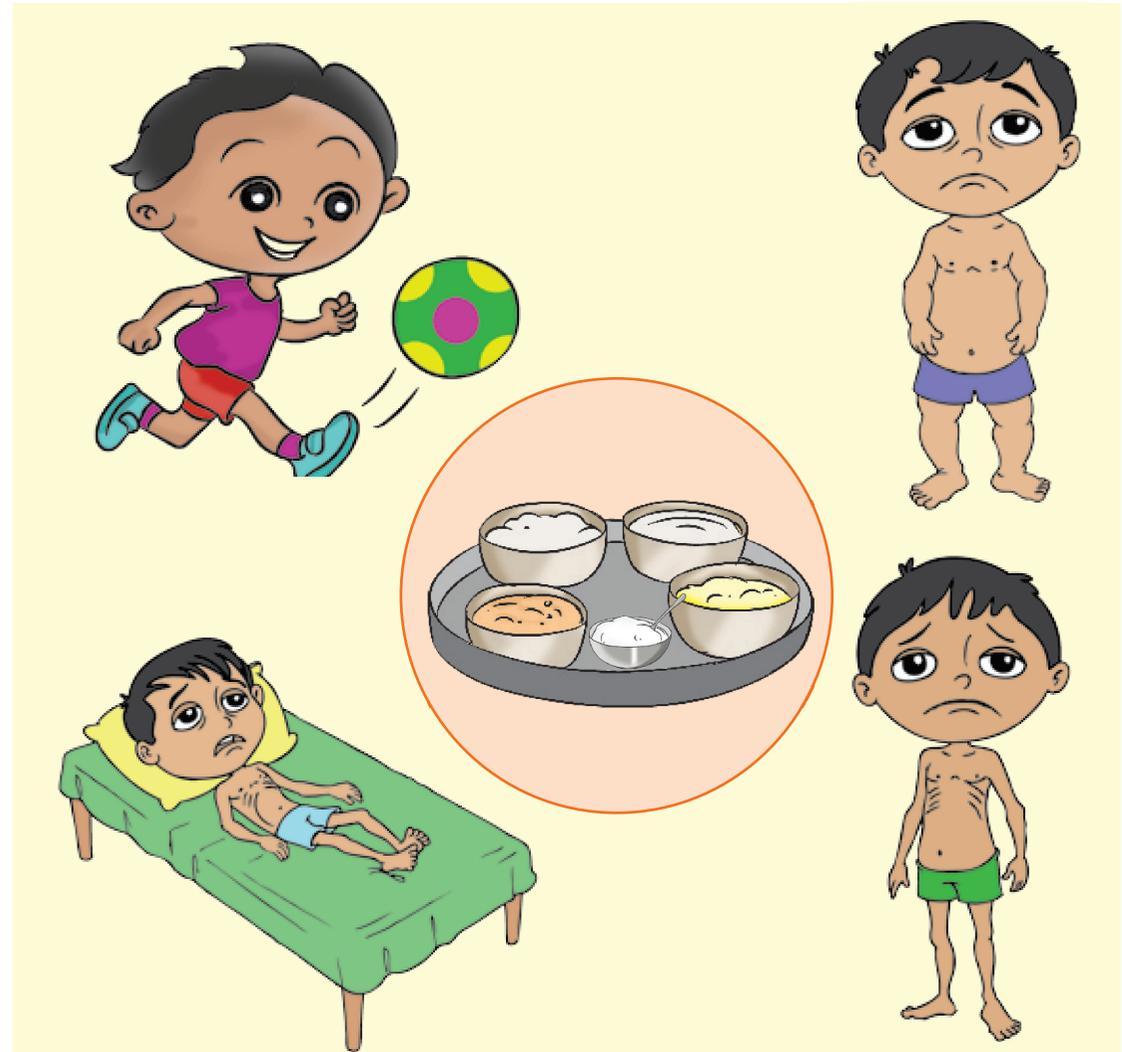
Improving Complementary Feeding

F4

# How much food should a child eat ?



- How do we decide how much food is enough for a child? Is the quantity of food increasing with the age of the child?
- How much food is needed for a child who is very active and playful? What about a child who sleeps most of the time or is an inactive child?
- How much food is required for a child who is healthy? What about a child who is thin?
- What about a child who is ill?





# How much food can a child eat ?



Display the card, ask the participants to read the questions, and respond. Facilitate discussion using the text on the right.

If possible, states should provide one steel katori of about 150 ml capacity, with a marking at 100 ml to all FLWs. This should be called a 'standard' katori.



How much can a child eat if offered unlimited amount of food like dal-rice, curd-rice or roti mashed in dal/milk, in a bowl (katori) throughout the day?

Use the points on the right side for discussion.

- If we feed children as much food as they want, different children will eat different amount of food. Some may eat more, some may eat less.
- If we do this every day, different children will eat different amount on different days. This is natural.
- All children do not eat the same amount of food all the time.
- Older children will tend to eat more than the younger children.
- Sick children may refuse to eat, but as they recover from an illness and their appetite returns, they may eat more than before.

Such experiments carried out by the scientists inform us that, if a child who is on mother's milk, is offered food, he/she will eat, on an average, the following amount depending on the age:

- By 9 months: about 200 gms or two standard bowls (katoris) in 24 hours
- By 12 months: about 300 gms or three standard bowls (katoris) in 24 hours
- By 18 months: about 500 gms or five standard bowls (katoris) in 24 hours
- If a child is not breastfeeding, the child will eat much more.

**It does not matter whether a child is active or sleepy, healthy or thin. In any case, a child should eat the above mentioned quantity.**



10 Minute

M9

Improving Complementary Feeding

F5

# How much food can a child eat ?



Let us think of an experiment:

If we keep offering food to a healthy child all day, how much food would the child eat:

At 9 months of age



At 12 months of age





# Why do children in growing age require increasing amounts of food ?



Discuss with the help of text on the right.

**We learnt earlier about the need for different kinds of food.**

One of the most important reasons we eat food is because we need energy, just as a bus requires diesel to keep running. A lot of the food that we eat – the rice, roti, dal, oil or ghee – has a lot of carbohydrate, protein, vitamins, and important nutrients that the body burns as fuel, just as a bus burns diesel. That's the reason, as children grow, they need more energy to run it and need more food.

Children need a variety of nutrients, even more than adults, for a number of purposes:

- **For Growth:** Children grow in height and weight throughout childhood, particularly in the mother's womb and in the first two years. This means the bones grow in length, muscles develop and all organs inside the body become larger. Every type of nutrient is needed for this growth: proteins, vitamins, iron, zinc, and a lot of energy (carbohydrates and fats) to help the growth.
- **For learning:** A child's brain grows to a size almost as large as an adult brain by 2 years of age. The child learns quickly, and her memory builds up as she sees, hears, and touches the world around her. For the development of the brain as well, many nutrients are needed and any deficit leads to slow learning.
- **For activity:** With each passing month the baby becomes more active, turns over, crawls, sits, stands and finally walks. She reaches out to hold objects, picks them up and releases them, becomes friendly with people and plays with them. Without adequate activity, neither growth nor learning can be adequate. These activities need a lot of energy and hence a lot of carbohydrate and fat is used up to fulfill the energy requirements.
- **For fighting infections:** As the child grows up in the first two years, she often falls ill due to fever, diarrhea, or cough and cold. For the body to learn to fight infections, it needs a variety of nutrients in her diet. Not having enough nutrients can prolong the illness, the child can lose weight and can fall ill seriously.



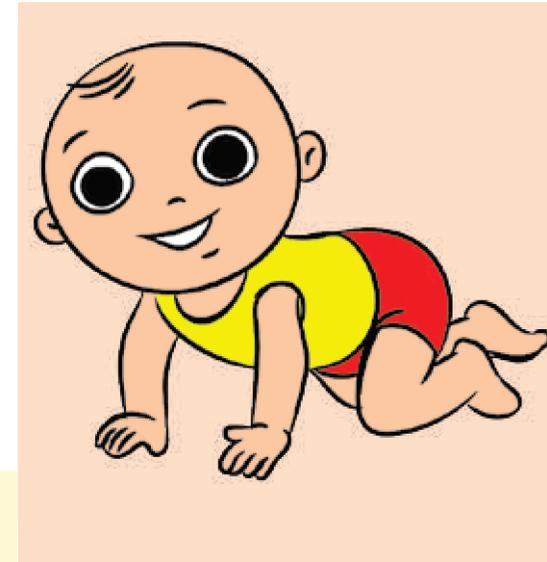
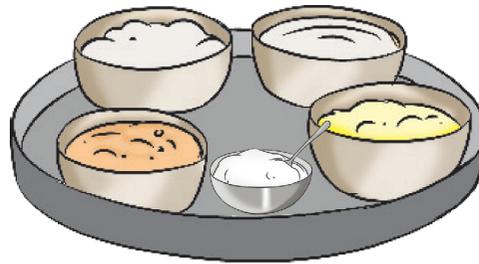
10 Minute

M9

Improving Complementary Feeding

F6

# Why do children in growing age require increasing amounts of food?





# How should a mother ensure that her child eats enough quantity of food?



Display, discuss ...



At the end, emphasize that

A child who has been habituated to eat from the age of six months, is most likely to eat enough later on as well.

How much food a child eats depends entirely on the appetite of the child. In turn the appetite depends on whether the child is well, and how active the child is. Of course the child is likely to eat more if she/he likes the taste of the food. Similarly, some children may get bored of eating the same type of food everyday. Finally, there is some variation from child to child - some children habitually eat more than others.

Rules that a family should follow to ensure that the child is eating enough:

- Offer food of different kinds and tastes, and learn what the child likes and dislikes
- Offer food frequently to the child, depending on the age:
  - 6-8 months: Offer food at least 3 times a day
  - 9-12 months: Offer food at least 4 times a day
  - After 12 months: Offer food at least 4 times a day, and in addition offer snacks twice a day
- Do not restrict how much the child eats, keep feeding if the child is willing to eat
- Let the child feed herself if she wants to, and let the child play with the food
- Learn how to tell if the child is likely to be hungry, and feed the child at such times – don't go by the clock
- Do not force a child to eat – it may work for a few days, but sooner or later the child figures out how to refuse.
- As long as the child is not sick, she will eat well. When a child is allowed to eat as much as she wants, it is usually sufficient for the child.
- These rules work well if the mother and child get used to them by the time the child is 9-10 months old.
- Older children tend to become more and more obstinate and playful and then it becomes more difficult to instill a feeding habit. That is why it is important for the mother and baby to get into a good habit of eating before the child is one year old.



10 Minute

M9

Improving Complementary Feeding

F7

# How should a mother ensure that her child eats enough quantity of food?



- What should a mother do?
- What should a mother not do ?





# How can we support the family to feed increasing amounts of food to the child?



**Display the card and discuss each point.**

**Use points on right side for further discussion**

We can help families by following the same principles that we have used earlier:

**Ask:**

Ask mothers and family members what has the child eaten the previous day

**Assess:**

Using our standard katori, assess the amount eaten by the child the previous day

[Describe how to use the katori and cooked food to assess the total amount the child has eaten in the previous 24 hours]

**Advise:**

- If the amount eaten is adequate for the age of the child, encourage the family to continue the practice.
- If the amount is less than adequate, find out how the mother feeds the child, and use the rules discussed earlier to correct her approach. Assure her that the child will eat as much as she requires, if she is allowed to eat as much as she wants.



10 Minute

M9

Improving Complementary Feeding

F8

# How can we support the family to feed increasing amounts of food to the child?



- What should we do?
- What should we not do?





# Action Points



Display the card and discuss



Use the previous cards to explain anything that is not clear.



10 Minute

M9

Improving Complementary Feeding

F9

# Action Points

How will we support families to ensure that the child is eating enough?

1. We will prioritize families with 6 month old children for Home visits.
2. During each visit, in addition to asking about the different food items that were fed to the child, we will check how much the child ate the previous day using our standard katori.
3. If required, we will explain to the mothers how to allow a child to eat as much food he/she wants.
4. We will follow-up to check if the child is eating sufficient quantity or not.



- 1 *Why this Monthly Meeting ?*
- 2 *Making or updating Home Visit Planner & Initiating Home Visits*
- 3 *Planning and Organizing Community Based Events at AWC*
- 4 *Observing Breastfeeding in Newborn Babies - Why and How*
- 5 *Identification and Care of a Weak Newborn baby*
- 6 *Complementary Feeding: Diet Diversity*
- 7 *Preventing Anemia in Women*
- 8 *Assessment of Growth in Children*
- 9 **Ensuring that Complementary Feeding improves over time**
- 10 *Ensuring Exclusive Breastfeeding*
- 11 *Care of the Weak Newborn Baby - How many weak babies are we missing?*
- 12 *How to ensure timely initiation of Complementary Feeding*
- 13 *Identifying and preventing Severe Acute Malnutrition*
- 14 *Feeding During Illness*
- 15 *Supporting mothers with issues in Breastfeeding*
- 16 *How to take care of weak newborn with the help of Kangaroo Mother Care*
- 17 *Identification & Referral of Sick Newborn*
- 18 *Preventing illnesses to avert Malnutrition and Death*
- 19 *Prevention of Anemia in girls and adolescents*
- 20 *Birth Preparedness- For Institutional and Home Delivery*
- 21 *Preparation During Pregnancy: For NewBorn Care & Family Planning*

