

# Responsive Care and Early Learning Addendum

## Counseling Cards



## About USAID Advancing Nutrition

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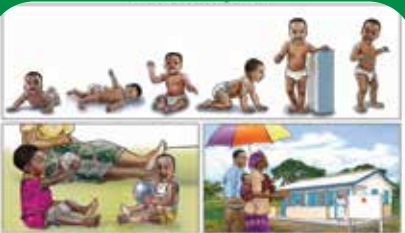
Teach your child to eat with love, patience, and good humor



Listen and talk to your child all the time



Give your child daily opportunities to learn through play



Seek help if you are concerned about your child's development



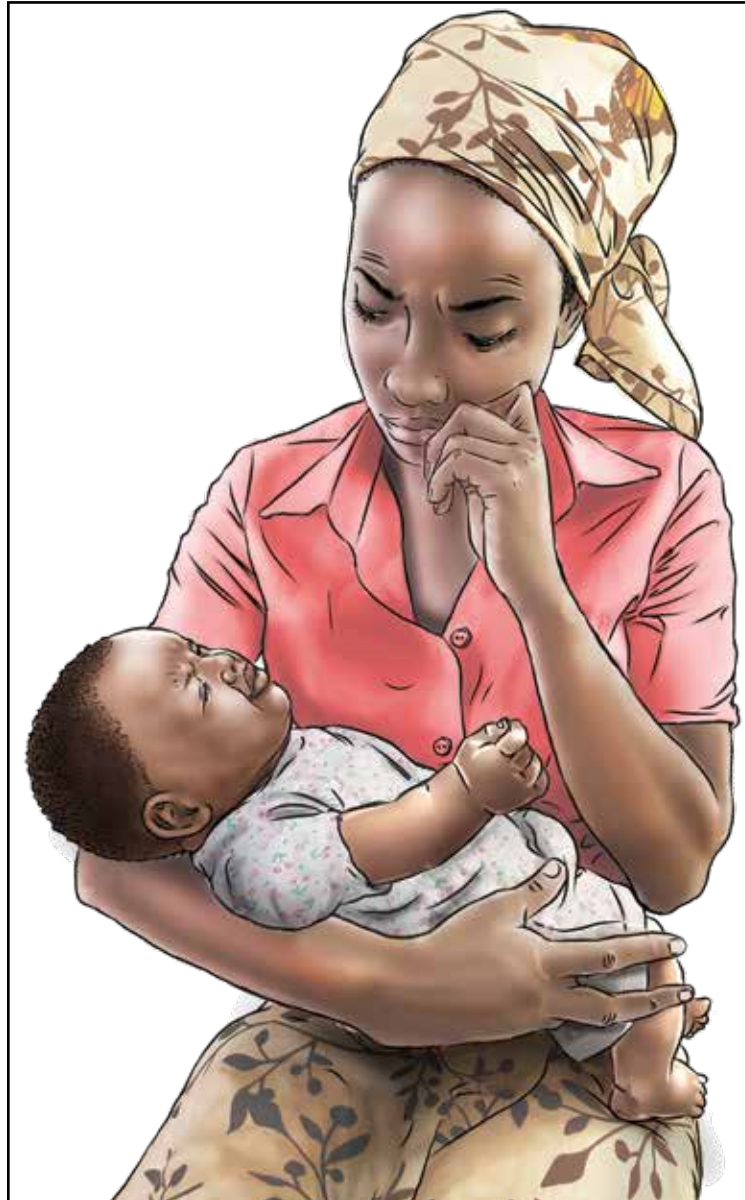
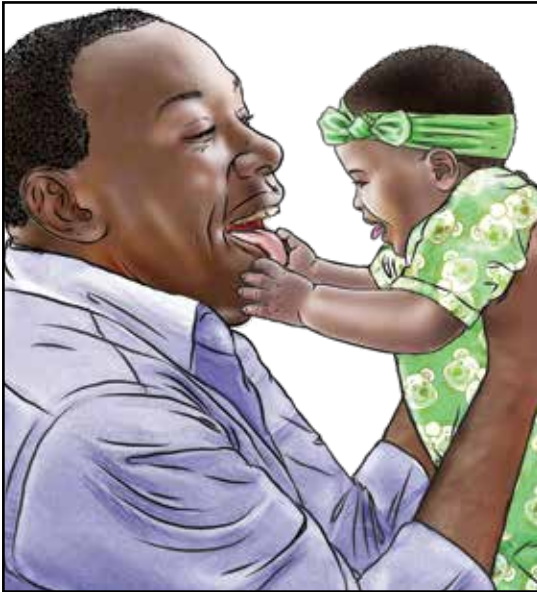
Take care of yourself in order to care for your child



Care and feeding for children with feeding difficulties



# Your loving care helps your child grow and develop



# Your loving care helps your child grow and develop

## Step 1:

Open and welcome

### Key Messages

- \* You are already helping your child learn and develop every day when you talk, play, feed, and care for your child. These simple activities help your child's brain to develop and make your child smart and clever.
- \* Responsive care is about interacting with your child, showing love, and responding consistently to match the needs and interests of your child.
- \* Responsive care is fun and easy to do! Dads, moms, grandparents, and the whole family play an important role in making your child feel safe, loved, and secure.

### Practical Tips

#### Learning your child's cues

- \* Your child tells you what he needs by using his sounds, facial expressions, and body movements. Observe your child. With practice, you will often be able to read your child's cues and respond with what he needs.
- \* Reading your child's cues takes practice. Watch your child a lot and look for ways your child uses her eyes, mouth, and body to tell you what she needs. Crying is usually the last form of communication.
- \* Create a daily routine for your child's care, including times for meals (starting at 6 months), bathing, and bedtime. Routines help your child feel secure because he knows and recognizes daily activities.

#### Responding when your child is upset

- \* When your child is upset, think through possible solutions—she may be hungry, tired, soiled, uncomfortable, or sick.

- \* Your child may just want your attention. Once you have calmed your child, think about the movements and sounds he was making. Over time, you will notice patterns in your child's movements and sounds and the kinds of things he needs.

- \* Gently rock, stroke, hold, or sing to your child. Provide skin-to-skin contact to stimulate and comfort your newborn baby.

#### Responding when your child wants to interact with you

- \* Your child can see from the day she is born. Look into your child's eyes often. It will help her to connect with you, and she will learn to identify emotions in people.
- \* Signs your baby wants your attention are wide-open eyes, looking toward your face or toward someone who is talking, being alert, sucking on his fists or objects, clasping his hands or feet together, and grasping on to your finger or an object.
- \* Respond to your child's sounds and movements, such as reaching out, babbling, smiling, or making faces, by producing similar vocalizations, gestures, and talking to her.

## Step 4:

Act

## Step 5:

Recap and reflect

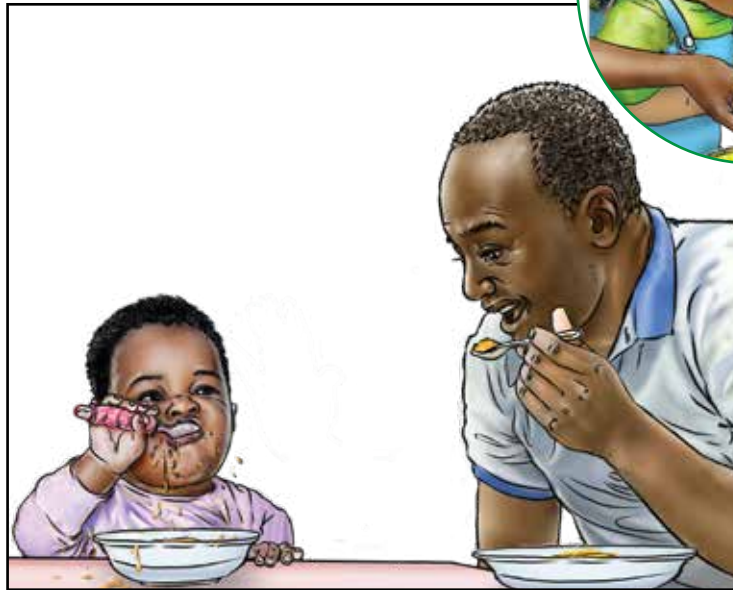
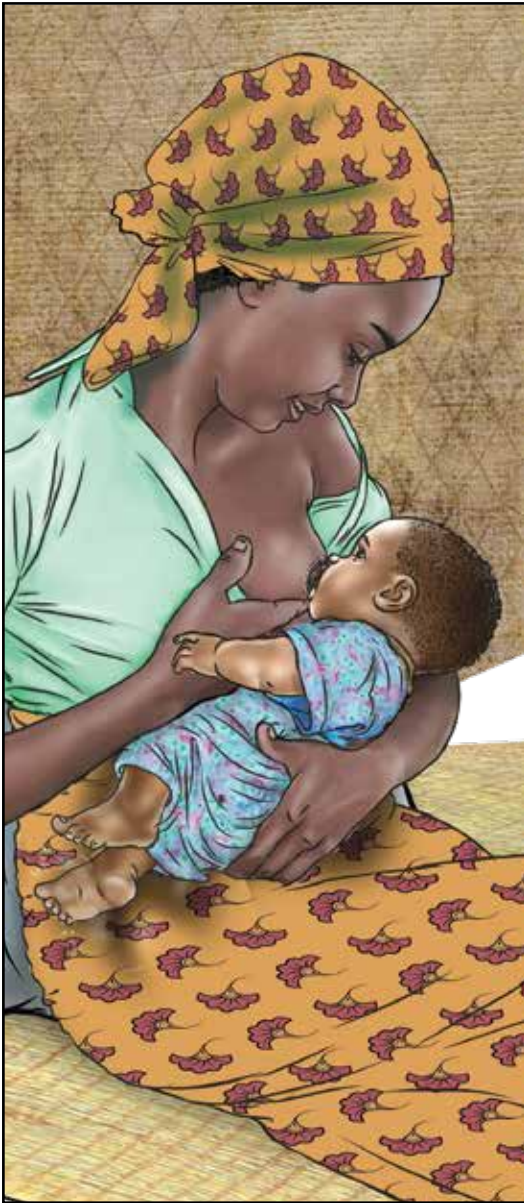
## Step 6:

Close

**CLOSE** by asking the caregiver to demonstrate or explain to you what they will do with their child.



# Teach your child to eat with love, patience, and good humor



**Step 1:**

Open and  
welcome

**Step 2:**

Assess and  
recap

**Step 3:**

Analyze and  
introduce  
today's topic

**Step 4:**

Act

**Step 5:**

Recap and  
reflect

**Step 6:**

Close

# Teach your child to eat with love, patience, and good humor

## Key Messages

- \* Practice responsive care during feeding times with your child to show support and love. This means listening and watching for cues that your child is hungry or full and responding appropriately to those cues.
- \* Responsive feeding helps make feeding a time of love and learning. It helps you and your child develop a strong bond and encourages good eating habits in your child as she grows.

## Practical Tips

### All children:

- \* Minimize distractions during mealtimes. Sit facing your child so you can focus on each other and on eating.
- \* Pay attention to your child's cues of hunger and fullness to be sure she is getting enough food but you are not overfeeding her. Never force a child to eat and never use food as a reward.
- \* Be patient and give your child time to eat. If your child shows signs of fullness, slow down or pause. Try offering another bite after a minute or two. End the feeding if he again indicates he is full.

#### Cues your baby is hungry

Wakes and tosses; sucks on fist (before 3 months); cries or fusses

#### Cues your baby is full

Closes mouth or lips shut; turns head away; decreases or stops sucking; spits out the nipple or falls asleep when full

#### Cues your baby is hungry

Opens mouth while feeding to show wanting more; smiles, gazes at caregiver, or coos during feeding to show wanting more; moves head toward food or tries to swipe food toward mouth; reaches or points for spoon or food

#### Cues your baby is full

Slows down or stops eating; pushes food away; shakes head to say "no more"

### Birth up to 6 months:

- \* Breast milk is all your baby needs for nutrition up to 6 months of age. Breastfeeding also stimulates loving feelings between mother and baby. It helps your baby to feel safe and comforted.
- \* During breastfeeding, a baby is learning how to control his appetite and soothe himself. He is determining how much milk he needs and how much he wants to suck to comfort himself.

### 6 up to 9 months:

- \* Slowly move the food in front of your baby's eyes. When she begins to follow and reach for the food, respond by offering the food to eat.

### 9 up to 12 months:

- \* Your baby may be interested in starting to use utensils or drinking water from a clean, open cup. Put some food on a spoon and let her try to feed herself. Give her a small cup with just a little bit of water to start and help her hold it. There will be spills, but encourage her. She will get better with practice!

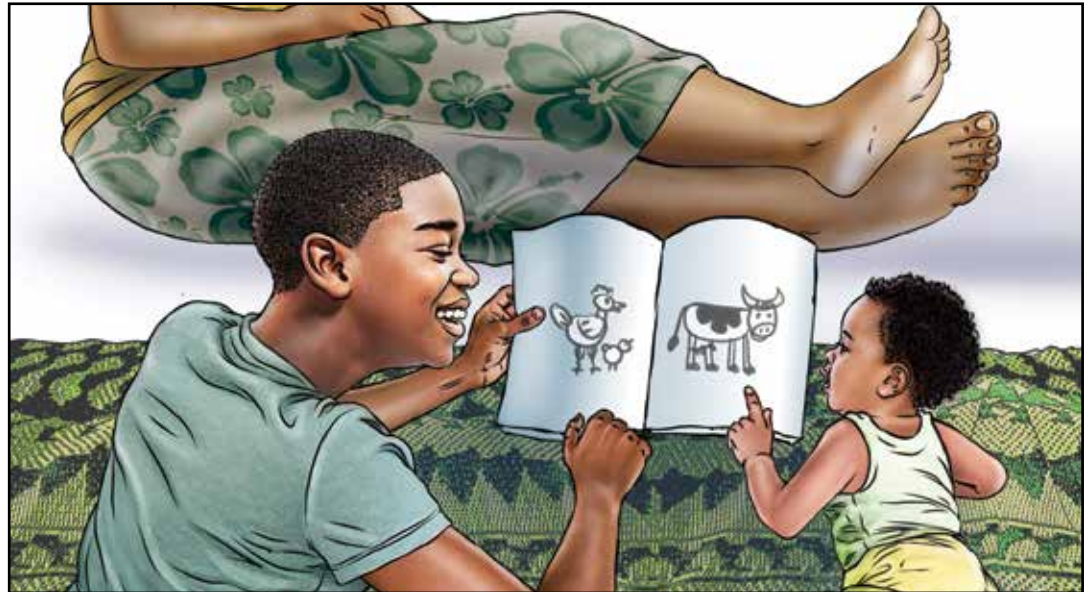
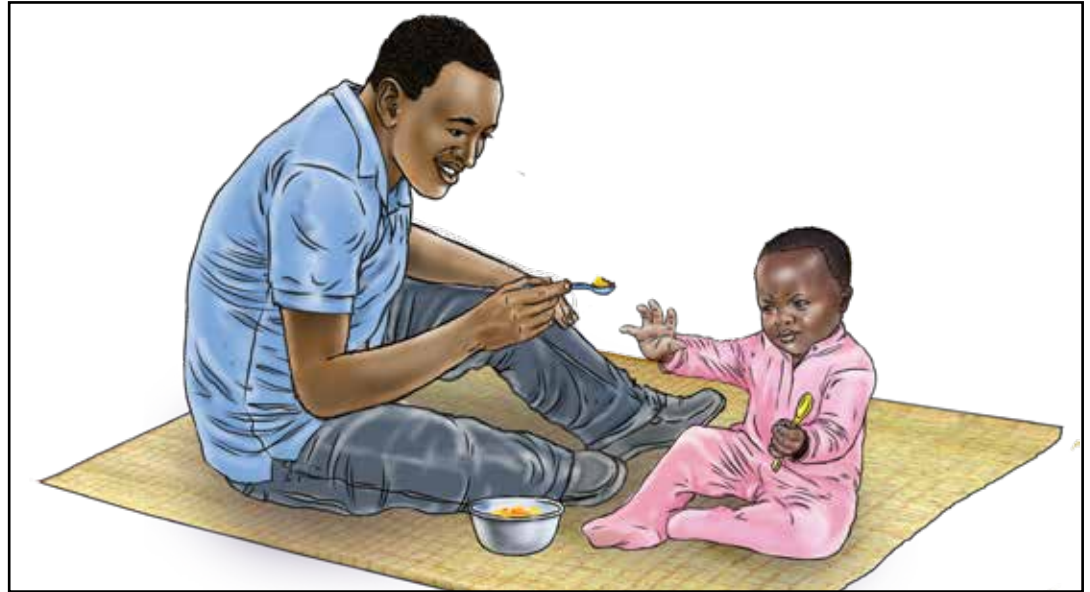
### 12 up to 24 months:

- \* You can start to provide small, cut-up bites of family foods for your child, as his chewing skills are stronger now. Encourage him to feed himself—he will get better and better at coordinating how to scoop up food and bring it to his mouth.

**CLOSE** by asking the caregiver to demonstrate or explain to you what they will do with their child.



# Listen and talk to your child all the time





# Listen and talk to your child all the time

## Step 1:

Open and welcome

### Key Messages

- \* Your child uses eye contact, cooing, facial expressions, and movement to tell you what she needs and wants from the day she is born. Follow her signals to understand her needs.
- \* Babies begin to understand many words before they can speak. Talk and sing to your child often so that he can hear words. He will learn to talk by listening to you talk.
- \* Have a conversation with sounds, words, and gestures. When your child communicates with you using sounds or movements, respond to him and he will respond back. You are each taking turns in the conversation.
- \* You can help your child learn new words by expanding on her language. If she says one word, such as “papa,” build her language by adding more words: “Papa loves you!”

## Step 2:

Assess and recap

## Step 3:

Analyze and introduce today's topic

## Step 4:

Act

## Step 5:

Recap and reflect

## Step 6:

Close

### Practical Tips

#### Birth up to 6 months:

- \* During or after breastfeeding, talk and sing to your baby. She is listening and will find comfort in your voice.
- \* Imitate your baby's sounds and gestures. He is communicating with you with his sounds and movements. When he coos, respond to him. Your baby needs to hear you talk. He will learn to talk by listening to others around him.

#### 6 up to 9 months:

- \* Your baby can start to recognize common words. When you see your child is no longer hungry, ask her, “All done?” If she shows you that she is still hungry, say, “More?”

- \* Respond to your baby's sounds and interests. Call your baby's name and notice his response.

#### 9 up to 12 months:

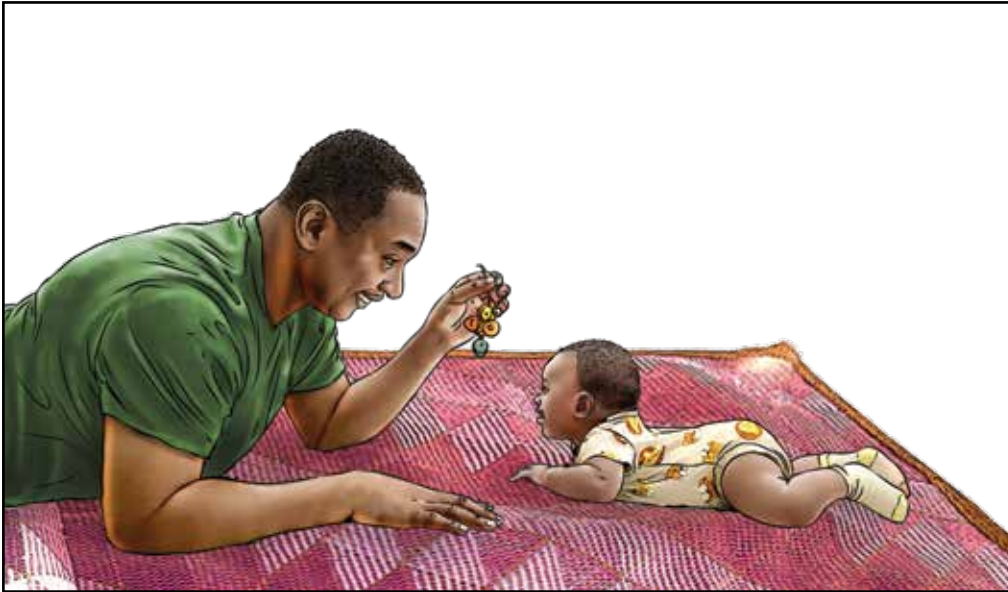
- \* Your baby will start to enjoy different soft foods now, such as soft fruits or cooked vegetables, and needs diverse, colorful foods to meet her nutritional needs. Use words to describe the food, and slowly she will understand new words. Name the different foods and parts of her body that she is using to eat, like her fingers and mouth.
- \* Talk to your baby as you prepare his meal. Describe what is happening as you interact with him, such as saying, “Here is your bowl” or “Dad cooked you potatoes.” Ask him questions, “Do you want eggs?” Give him time to respond with gestures such as pointing or sounds before you provide a verbal answer.

#### 12 up to 24 months:

- \* As you feed your child, describe the colors and textures of her food. Encourage her to speak by asking her the name or the color of the food she is eating. Point and tell her the names of the foods after she has had a chance to try and answer you!
- \* Sing with your child. Start a song and let him sing parts that he knows. Over time, he can sing more and more himself as he learns more words and you can practice taking turns.
- \* Children learn to love stories when they read together with their parents every day. Ask her to point to different people and animals in a book, magazine, or poster. Praise her for finding the animals and objects!

**CLOSE** by asking the caregiver to demonstrate or explain back to you what they will do with their child.

# Give your child daily opportunities to learn through play





# Give your child daily opportunities to learn through play

## Step 1:

Open and welcome

## Key Messages

- \* Children learn by playing, observing, copying, and trying new things starting from the moment they are born. Your child enjoys and learns through playing with you! All your child needs is you
- \* Give your child opportunities to explore the world around him through play. He will enjoy playing with his fingers and toes, your face, and household objects. Follow his lead, encouraging play with safe objects that interest him. Observe his body language and sounds, and do not force him to play with something when he is not interested.
- \* Give your child challenging but achievable tasks. Guide her actions and build on what she can do to make the task slightly more difficult.

## Step 2:

Assess and recap

## Step 3:

Analyze and introduce today's topic

## Step 4:

Act

## Step 5:

Recap and reflect

## Step 6:

Close

## Practical Tips

### Birth up to 6 months:

- \* Slowly move colorful objects for your baby to see and reach for. Watch his eyes move side to side as he follows the object.
- \* Place your baby on her tummy with a colorful object out in front of her. Watch her reach for it and praise her when she picks it up! She learns by putting objects in her mouth so make sure the object is clean, not sharp, and not too small that she could swallow it.

### 6 up to 9 months:

- \* As you introduce new foods for your baby, he is learning new textures and tastes. Encourage him when he tries new foods! Having diverse and colorful foods is important.

- \* Give your baby clean, safe household objects to pick up, touch, feel, bang, and explore. Examples of simple toys to play with include small containers or a pot with a spoon.
- \* Draw or make simple picture books to develop your baby's curiosity and help her learn new things.

### 9 up to 12 months:

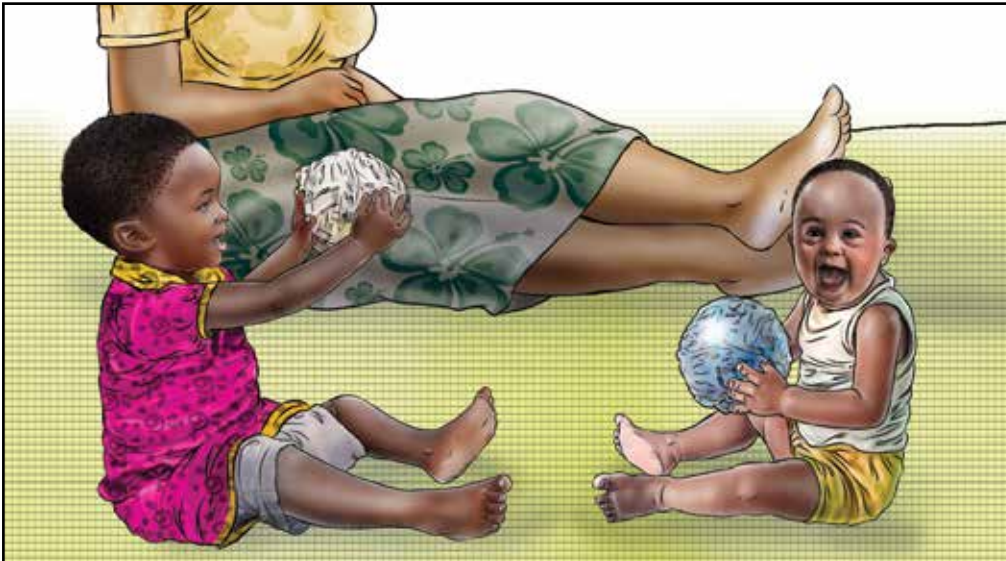
- \* During mealtimes, give your baby small finger foods and encourage him to try new, healthy foods. He is starting to learn how to pick up things with his fingers and chew. He will often make a mess and that is okay! He is learning to feed himself and exploring different types of foods!
- \* Play games like "peekaboo" with your baby. While she is looking at you, cover your face with hands or fabric. Say, "Where is Daddy?" Open hands and say, "Boo! Here I am!" Laugh with her as she sees you! She is starting to learn that you do not disappear when she does not see you.

### 12 up to 24 months:

- \* Play with your child and encourage him to try harder tasks. Encourage him to stack objects, knock them over, and start again. Give him more objects to stack. Help him if he gets stuck!
- \* Encourage your child's imagination using sock puppets. Make up a story using the puppets.

**CLOSE** by asking the caregiver to demonstrate or explain to you what they will do with their child.

# Seek help if you are concerned about your child's development





# Seek help if you are concerned about your child's development

## Step 1:

Open and welcome

### Key Messages

- \* Children learn at different paces. Some children learn quickly, and some children need more time. But remember, all children can learn! Children's skills build upon one another. For example, a child must learn to sit before he can stand.
- \* Some children are born with or develop conditions that can affect their abilities. Children may develop differently in how they move, see, hear, learn, think, or interact with others.
- \* Many conditions contribute to children developing differently. You may hear many things about disabilities in your community, but it is important to know that disabilities are not the fault of the mom or dad, and they are not a curse. All children can learn, and some children may need extra support.
- \* All children should have their growth, development, hearing, and vision monitored to identify any concerns early. If you are concerned about your child's development, seek support from a health care provider.

## Step 2:

Assess and recap

## Step 3:

Analyze and introduce today's topic

## Step 4:

Act

## Step 5:

Recap and reflect

## Step 6:

Close

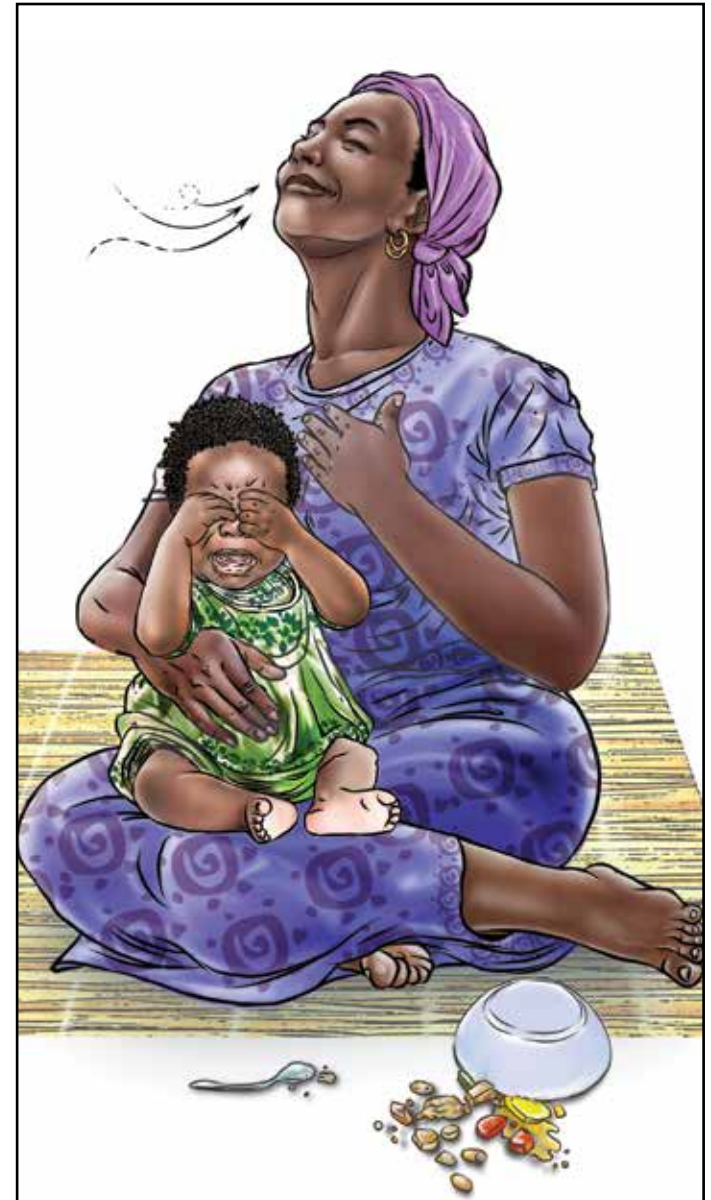
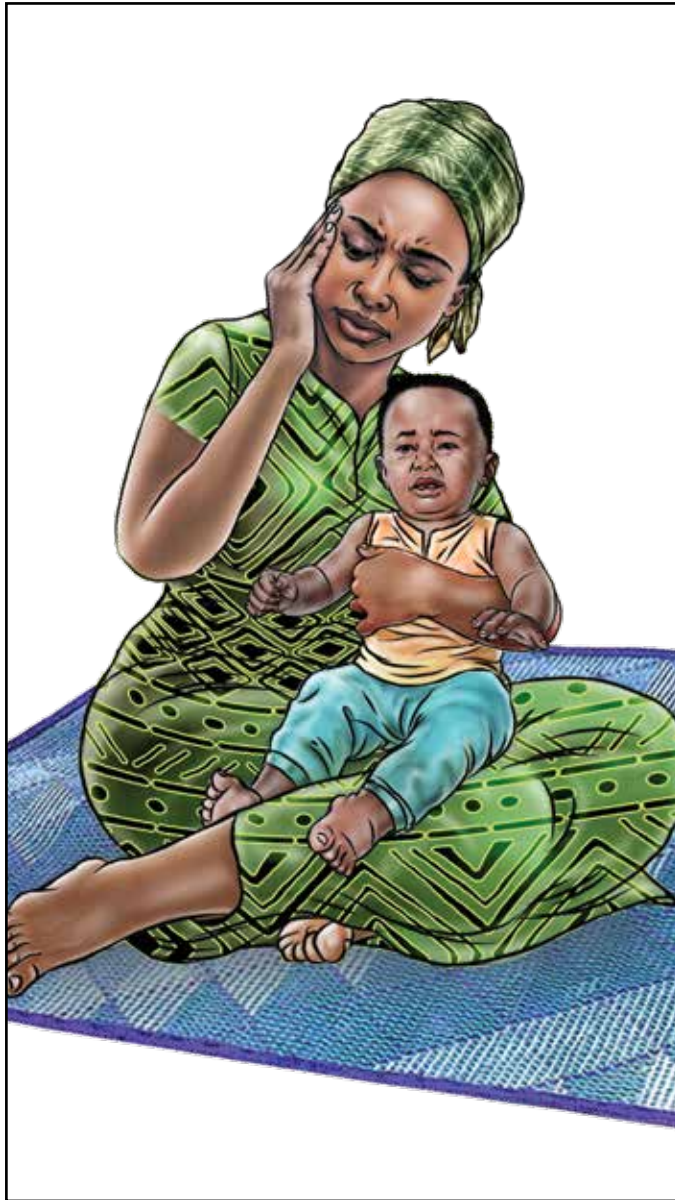
### "Ask and Advise" Practical Tips

- \* **ASK:** Monitoring your child's development is useful to see if there are any areas that need extra support. By development I mean: how your child learns, communicates, understands, relates to people, moves her body, uses her hands and fingers, and also hearing and vision. How is your child developing in all of these areas? Please give me examples of what she does in her daily life.
- \* **ASK:** Compared with other children of the same age, do you have any concerns about your child's development?
  - **IF CONCERNS, SAY:** All children develop at different paces. If there are any difficulties, children benefit from early identification and support. You should visit a health facility to discuss your concerns further with a skilled provider.

- **WARNING SIGNS FOR REFERRALS:** If your child ever regresses, meaning he stops being able to perform skills that he used to do such as talking or walking, this can be a sign of a serious problem. You must seek care immediately.
- \* **ASK:** Compared with other children of the same age, do you have any concerns about your child's hearing or vision?
  - **IF CONCERNS, SAY:** You should visit a health facility to discuss your concerns further with a skilled provider and have them check your child's hearing and vision.
  - **WARNING SIGNS FOR REFERRALS:** If your child does not respond to noise or does not use her eyes to follow your face or objects by age 3 months, seek care at your health facility.
- \* **ASK:** Compared with other children of the same age, do you have any concerns about your child's feeding?
  - **IF CONCERNS, SAY:** I would be happy to talk with you about some strategies to help your child to feed. If the problems persist, you should visit a health facility. (See: "Special Circumstances Counseling Card 7.")
  - **WARNING SIGNS FOR REFERRALS:** Seek care immediately if your child is losing weight, frequently coughs or tears while feeding, has rigid muscles or jaw clenching that prevent feeding, vomits frequently, or sweats excessively or tires quickly when feeding.
  - **IF NO CONCERNS:** Praise the caregiver for all of their efforts to help their child grow and develop! Encourage the caregiver to keep practicing responsive care and age-appropriate feeding practices. See *Cards on Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding in the UNICEF C-IYCF package* and *Cards on Play and Communication in this RCEL Addendum* for more specific ideas.

**CLOSE** by asking the caregiver to explain to you what they agreed to do with their child. Make sure there is a clear plan for a visit to the health facility if there are concerns or issues. Brainstorm with the caregiver ways to address barriers to accessing a health facility if necessary.

# Take care of yourself in order to care for your child





# Take care of yourself in order to care for your child

## Step 1:

Open and welcome

### Key Messages

- \* Your child loves spending time with you. He is learning by observing, imitating, listening, and interacting with you. Parenting is rewarding and fun, but it is not always easy.

## Step 2:

Assess and recap

- \* Feeling big emotions during caregiving is normal because it can be very stressful. Feeling these emotions is not something to feel guilty or ashamed about. All caregivers need emotional support and help from their partners, families, friends, and community.

## Step 3:

Analyze and introduce today's topic

- \* Creating routines is helpful for you and your child. Think of ways to include activities you enjoy in your routine. Consider singing, sewing, exercise, dancing, drawing, or any activity that calms you and helps you to take care of yourself.
- \* Talk with your spouse, friends, or family members. Share your experiences parenting with a confidant. Share both what is going well and any challenges you are having.

## Step 4:

Act

- \* Whenever you feel exhausted and overwhelmed, it is good to reach out for help from your partner, family, or friends. If these feelings do not go away, seek care from your health facility. Depression and anxiety are common challenges, especially in the postpartum period, and require treatment.

## Step 5:

Recap and reflect

### Practical Tips

#### Birth up to 6 months:

- \* Your baby is feeding on demand all day and all night and depending on mom and dad for everything.
- \* Ask your partner, other family members, and friends for help. It will benefit your baby and you and give you time to take care of yourself, such as time to visit with a friend, get some sleep or do any healthy

## Step 6:

Close

activity that helps you relax. This can help prevent you from feeling exhausted and overwhelmed.

#### 6 up to 12 months:

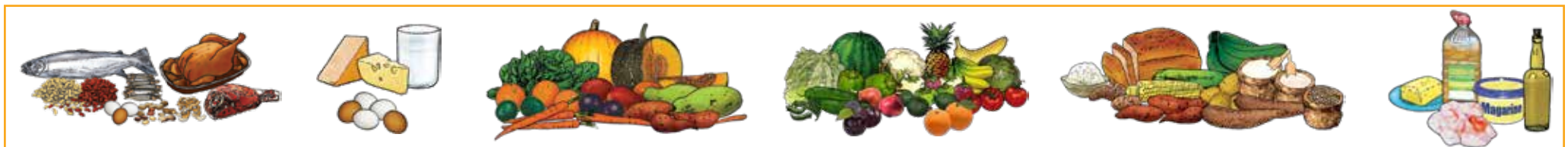
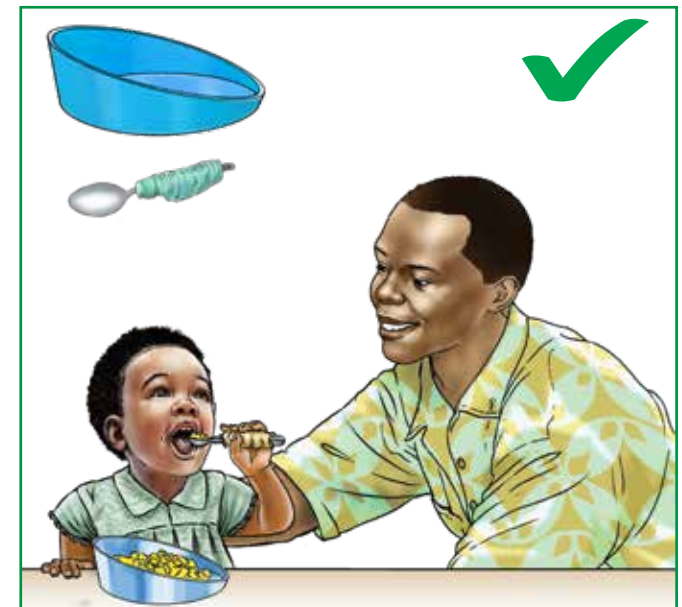
- \* Your baby is starting to feed on solid foods, sleeps less, and is moving around! He might develop some fears of people he does not know and want to be with you all the time.
- \* It is okay to feel frustrated because you cannot get your baby to calm down or she is not behaving how you would like. Take a moment and take several slow, deep breaths in and out. Focus on your breathing to calm yourself before going back to try to calm your baby. Do not hesitate to ask a family member or friend to help if you need a little rest.

#### 12 up to 24 months:

- \* Your child is developing her emotions, and she will soon start to do more things for herself like getting dressed and toileting. She will get frustrated when she tries but cannot do things herself. She may appear stubborn or get upset.
- \* Recognize that this is normal and do not get angry. Step away if you need to, and do not be hard on yourself. Ask your partner or a confidant to look after your child while you step away. Even 10 minutes away from a stressful situation can help you feel more relaxed.

**CLOSE** by asking the caregiver to demonstrate or explain to you what they will do to take care of themselves. Make sure there is a clear plan for a visit to the health facility if there are concerns or issues. Brainstorm with the caregiver ways to address barriers to accessing a health facility if necessary.

# Care and feeding for children with feeding difficulties





# Care and feeding for children with feeding difficulties

## Step 1:

Open and welcome

## Step 2:

Assess and recap

## Step 3:

Analyze and introduce today's topic

## Step 4:

Act

## Step 5:

Recap and reflect

## Step 6:

Close

## Key Messages

- ✳ Sometimes children have difficulties feeding, and they may require additional support to be able to feed well. It is important to consult a health care provider if you have any concerns about your child's feeding.
- ✳ Children with feeding difficulties are at increased risk of becoming malnourished. Regular growth monitoring is important for all children.
- ✳ Seek immediate care at a facility if your child is losing weight, or displays warning signs like frequent coughing or tearing while feeding, jaw tightening that prevents feeding, fast breathing or breathing becoming wet-sounding, excessive sweating or tiring quickly when feeding, or vomiting after feeding.

## Practical Tips

- ✳ **ASK:** Can you tell me more about the concerns you have about your child's feeding?
- ✳ **ADVISE** based on the caregiver's concerns and the child's age:

## Breastfeeding

### Difficulties latching to the breast:

- ✳ Try different breastfeeding positions and find one that works for you. You may need different positions for each breast. Refer to the UNICEF C-IYCF card on different breastfeeding positions.
- ✳ If your baby cannot latch, express breast milk. Use a cup to feed your baby instead of a bottle. Refer to the C-IYCF card on expressing breast milk.
- ✳ To cup feed safely, bring the cup to your baby's lower lip and allow him to take small amounts of breast milk, lapping the breast milk with his tongue. Do not pour the milk into your baby's mouth.

## Complementary feeding starting at 6 months

### Difficulty controlling head or body:

- ✳ A stable, upright position with support for eating and drinking is one of the most important factors for safe feeding. Make sure your child's whole body is supported well, so that she can focus on eating.
- ✳ If your child is floppy, provide support to his back and head using your body or a chair. Always keep his head upright while feeding to prevent choking or having food go down his airway.

### Persistent difficulty chewing or swallowing:

- ✳ Difficulty chewing and swallowing can cause choking and can lead to illness. Consult with a health care provider and ask for specific feeding strategies for your child.
- ✳ Consider pureeing foods by passing soft foods through a sieve. It is easier for children to learn to control foods in their mouth and swallow if they are only one texture.
- ✳ Water and other liquids are easy for children to choke on if they have problems swallowing. Never pour liquids into your child's mouth. Consider thicker liquids like soft porridge or yogurt.

### Difficulty self-feeding:

- ✳ Spoons and forks with thicker handles are easier for children to hold. Attach a rubber tube or piece of wood to the spoon handle to make it thicker.
- ✳ Plates with steep sides may make it easier for some children to scoop up food themselves.

**Note:** If the feeding problem is that the child is sick with common illnesses such as fever or diarrhea, refer to UNICEF C-IYCF counseling card on feeding a sick baby up to 6 months of age or a sick child over age 6 months for guidance on appropriate feeding during and after illness, or refer child to a health care provider.

**CLOSE** by asking the caregiver to demonstrate or explain to you what they agreed to do with their child. Make sure there is a clear plan for a visit to the health facility to address the feeding issues. Brainstorm with the caregiver ways to address barriers to accessing a health facility.



## **USAID ADVANCING NUTRITION**

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USAID Advancing Nutrition is the Agency's flagship multi sectoral nutrition project, addressing the root causes of malnutrition to save lives and enhance long term health and development.

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