Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six month’s of an infant’s life. Let’s take a look at what exclusive breastfeeding means.

What is exclusive breastfeeding?
- Exclusive breastfeeding means feeding your baby only your milk. This is the healthiest choice for your baby until he is six months old.

Why is exclusive breastfeeding best?
- Babies are healthier.
- Babies grow better.
- It is easier for mom to make enough milk for her baby.
- It helps prevent another pregnancy while your baby is still small.

Doesn’t my baby need water in hot weather?
- No. All the liquid your baby needs is in your milk.

Won’t solid foods help my baby grow?
- For babies under six months, solid food replaces your milk. This means your baby gets fewer calories, not more.

Won’t solid foods help my baby sleep longer?
- No. Solid foods will not help your baby sleep longer.
- Cereal in a bottle will not help your baby sleep, is bad for her teeth, and may upset her tummy.

Should I stop breastfeeding when my baby is six months old?
- Six months is a good age to start feeding solids, but a baby’s main source of food should still be your milk.
- It is best to breastfeed until your baby is at least one year old. Continue for as long as you and your baby wish.

Source: Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute
**SMART CHOICES**

Many parents worry they are not feeding their child enough food. But serving sizes for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are much smaller than for adults. It is important to remind parents that their child may eat more or less than this depending on their age, gender, and feeding patterns.

**Smart Choices for Feeding 9-Month Old's**

**Smart Choices for Feeding Toddlers Smart Choices for Feeding Preschoolers**

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**Is Bedtime Linked to Obesity?**

Family structure, including regular bedtimes, mealtimes and limited screen time, appear to be linked to better emotional health in preschoolers, and that might lower the chances of obesity later, a new study suggests. "This study provides more evidence that routines for preschool-aged children are associated with their healthy development and could reduce the likelihood that these children will be obese," said lead author Sarah Anderson of The Ohio State University. The new findings build on previous research by Anderson and her colleagues showing an association between earlier preschool bedtimes and decreased odds of obesity later. Previous work published in 2010 showed in a US national sample that obesity prevalence was lowest for children who got enough sleep, had limits on screen time, and who ate meals with their families.

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**BALANCING ACT**

**AGES: 12-24 MONTHS**

**Goal:** Toddlers need to practice both dynamic and static balance.

**Static Balance** requires a child to maintain a desired shape while still. **Dynamic Balance** requires the child to maintain an on-balance position while moving, starting and stopping.

**Directions:**

1. Have toddlers balance a bean bag on their heads.
2. Encourage them to stand up and sit down, walk fast and slow while balancing it. Talk about what they are doing as they move saying, “You’re walking so quickly with the bean bag on top of your head” or “I can tell you are trying to balance it because you are walking slowly.”
3. Then have them balance the bean bags using other body parts: shoulders, elbow, knee, foot. Again, describe their actions while they move. Say, “Balancing it on your elbow looks tricky!” or “You are holding your foot very still to keep the beanbag on top of it.”
4. Have them get down on the floor, feet in the air and balance it on the bottom of one foot and then make it jump like a frog off their feet.

**Don’t forget to laugh and have fun!**

*Source: Dr. Craft Active Book of Play*

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**Healthy Eats**

**Mini Pepper Boats**

**Ingredients:**

- Sweet mini peppers
- Cream Cheese, (garlic & herb or select your own)
- Carrots

**Directions:**

1. Slice pepper in half lengthways. Cut and discard the inner parts and seeds, leaving the rest of the peppers halves intact.
2. Scoop some cream cheese into the pepper and spread around inside it.
3. Slice the carrot and cut into triangles.

*Source: Eats Amazing*