



Topic Tuesday

NUTRITION AND FEEDING

Figuring out *When*, *What*, and *How*

J O Y F U L - B E G I N N I N G S . O R G

Welcome to:

Joyful

BEGINNINGS



Joyful Beginnings is an online community providing support, resources, and a sense of belonging to all those who share their lives with young children, pre-birth to age three.

At Joyful Beginnings parents benefit from the knowledge and expertise of experienced Early Childhood Educators, but more importantly they can learn from and lean on each other.

Joyful Beginnings offers a safe space to learn about and share simple, natural, and joyful ways to care for young children.

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1

*Introduction
to:*

**NUTRITION
AND
FEEDING**

NUTRITION AND FEEDING

As with any transition phase in the early years of life, feeding is no different: take it slowly, pay attention to your baby, try it and see how your baby does, and then go from there. Generally, a baby is ready for food when they are around 6 months old and can reliably sit up and support their head. Begin with mashed foods, feeding your baby in your lap and then move on to finger foods and then independent eating.



2

**SIGNS OF
READINESS**

HOW WILL I KNOW MY BABY IS READY?

Your baby will let you know they are ready for solid foods in the following ways:

- They can sit and have good head/neck control
- They reach for or show interest in food
- They mimic you chewing
- Their tongue is able to move side/side and up/down
- The tongue thrust reflex has quieted

A quick note on the gag reflex:

Gagging is not and does not necessarily lead to choking. By observing your child closely you should be able to determine if your is choking or if they will be able to gag and get the food back out.



3

**WHERE TO
BEGIN?
LAP FEEDING**



LAP FEEDING

To begin, feed your child from your lap, until they can comfortably sit in a high chair. Being in your lap allows the child to feel secure and supported.

- Prepare your materials ahead of time: have a bowl, spoon, small water glass, a towel or cloth, and a washcloth within in reach, but not close enough for your baby to grab.
- Bring the spoon into view of your baby and wait for them to open their mouth or move toward the spoon.
- Go slowly in this way until your child shows signs that they are done (battering the spoon away, turning their head away, spitting it all back out).
- Offer period sips from the cup and be prepared for a little bit of mess. Have your cloth handy!
- When you are ready to clean your baby up, dampen the wash cloth with warm water, bring it up for your baby to see, let them know you are going to clean them, and then wash hands and face.

Eventually your child will be ready to sit in a high and able to take the spoon and bring it to their mouth. In this phase, it is helpful to prepare the spoon for your child and then allow them to pick it up themselves. It is also good to get comfortable with the mess because during this time, there will be a lot of spilled food and dirty clothes!

3

**STARTING
SOLIDS**

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Your child is ready for more solid food:

- When they have the dexterity and motor control to pick up small pieces of food and bring them to their mouth
- They have teeth, or teeth starting to come through (although a child who can capably gum small pieces of food could manage)

Solid Foods

What to Introduce and When

- 2. Leaf**
(Vegetables)
- Broccoli
 - Spinach
 - Peas
 - Squash

- 3. Stem/Stalk**
(Grains)
- Oats
 - Rice
 - Millet



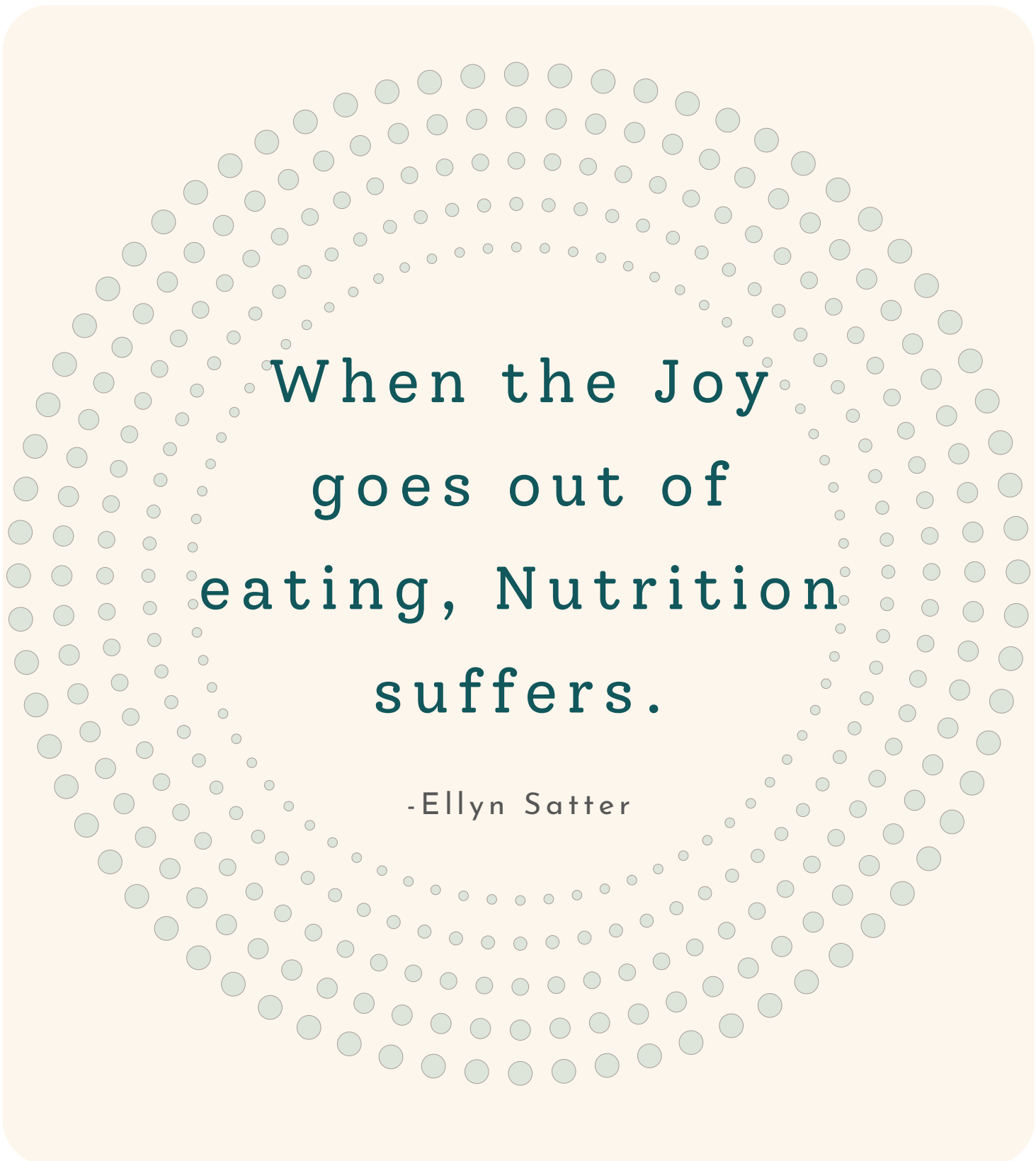
- 1. Flower**
(Fruits)
- Applesauce
 - Banana
 - Avocado
 - Pears

- 4. Roots**
(Root Veg)
- Sweet Potato
 - Carrots
 - Beets

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TIMING

Begin with simply with one food at a time, and follow the general guidelines above. Starting form the top of the plant and working your way down to the roots. Offer your child the same food several times. Their tastes will be different day to day. You will know if your child really does not like something.



When the Joy
goes out of
eating, Nutrition
suffers.

-Ellyn Satter

RESOURCES



Links

Ellyn Satter Institute
www.ellynsatterinstitute.org

Joyful Beginnings Podcast:
[Nutrition and the Very Young Child](#)

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