

Parent  
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August  
September  
2022



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### The Truth About Food Pouches

While food pouches meet a need for convenient, shelf-stable food options, there is growing concern about the long-term impact of serving pureed food past the usual transition to table foods. Food pouches are a recent trend in the marketplace and provide quick, on-the-go food for young children. Children can easily suck the puree from the pouch, using similar mouth and tongue movements as breast or bottle feeding.

Aspects that parents/caregivers may not realize are that pouches oversimplify the eating process, limit children's exposure to new textures (which promotes developmentally appropriate oral skills), and extend the use of pureed foods beyond the usual age for baby food. Transitioning to table food is an important developmental milestone for infants and toddlers, with a particular window of opportunity between 6 and 18 months of age. Spoon feeding by an adult and self-feeding of finger foods encourage the child's lips and tongue to develop different muscles. Self-feeding also builds hand-eye coordination and development of the pincer grasp, (thumb and first finger coming together on an object).

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be on table foods similar to what their family eats by 12 months. Limiting exposure to finger foods may delay a child's fine motor development and speech acquisition. Additionally, low nutritional intake and increased picky eating behaviors may result from a lack of age-appropriate feeding.

The choking factor related to food pouches is another concern that parents may not be aware of. Children should never be given any type of food while buckled in a car seat, which is exactly when busy parents tend to use the handy pouches. Additionally, the covers of the pouches are the perfect size to block the airway and pose a choking hazard for young children.

If parents or caregivers choose to use food pouches, they are encouraged to educate themselves on the risks and long-term effects on children. Check the ingredient label for added sugars, and provide the appropriate serving size for the age of the child. Although there's nothing wrong with using the pouches occasionally, pediatricians are concerned that parents might become too reliant on them.

Eating a rainbow of color ensures we're getting many important nutrients.



## A to Z Animals

By Michael Kania  
An entire alphabet of animals waits for you inside this book.

You can practice your ABC's, learn fun facts about animals you know, and maybe even meet a new critter or two as you explore A to Z Animals!



### IF A FROG JUMPS IN YOUR BOAT

Row, row, row your boat,  
Gently down the stream.  
If a frog jumps in your boat,  
Don't forget to scream! (Scream)  
Row, row, row your boat,  
Gently down the stream.  
If an alligator jumps in your boat,  
Don't forget to scream! (Scream)

Parent Page Edited by Cheryl Chinn