

Progression to Solid Foods- Developmental Food Continuum

When children are learning to “chew,” foods should be introduced in a systematic progression, starting with foods providing the most sensory feedback and awareness to those that provide little feedback and require greater oral motor control. Before progressing from dissolvable solids to softer foods, a child needs to demonstrate controlled open mouth munching with these meltable solids. If a child is manipulating foods with a closed mouth, he is most likely mashing/sucking instead of chewing, a pattern that will not allow for safe progression to more advanced table foods. The following is a list of foods to try in each stage of the continuum:

Dissolvable Solids (meltable solids or “crunchies”)

- Club crackers
- Graham crackers
- Veggie Stix
- Tings
- Gerber star puffs
- Puffed cereals, like Kix
- Cheese puffs
- Baby cookies
- Gerber freeze dried fruits/vegetables

Foods with softer inside but textured outside

The textured outside of these foods provides sensory awareness of where the food is inside the mouth so that the child can transfer it to his lateral surface and “crunch” into it.

- Toast
- Pop Tarts
- Cereal bars
- Waffles
- Cereal bars
- Smiley potato rounds
- Tater tots
- Some biscuits/muffins

Soft Solids

These are finger foods that have a soft outside that does not provide great texture awareness to transfer and control the food on lateral surface for chewing. A dissolvable solid can be added to these foods if needed to add texture/sensory feedback.

- Diced soft fruits/vegetables cubes
- Diced soft meats
- Diced soft cheese
- Cooked beans
- Pasta
- Avocado dices

