

## **Touching Hearts Touching Minds Handout #2 The Airplane (Infant Feeding 6 Months) Counseling Tool**

### **What is the key message?**

- Introduce cereal to baby at six months.
- Offer cereal with a spoon, not in a bottle.
- Serve cereal first, before offering other foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Mix cereal with breastmilk or iron-fortified formula.

### **Who should receive this message?**

- Parents of infants less than six months old.

### **How can this message be used?**

#### **Open:**

- Every baby needs to feel loved. Parents taking care of their baby's needs are helping baby feel loved. What are ways your baby lets you know what he needs or wants?
- Can you imagine having the same food over and over and suddenly experiencing a new flavor and texture?
- Can you imagine your excitement when you offer cereal to your baby for the first time?
- How can allowing babies experiment with new tastes and food be a way of showing love?
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#### **Dig:**

- How do babies tell parents they are ready for more than breastmilk or iron fortified cereal? Sample responses:
  - Baby will be fussy when parents are eating. He is letting you know he wants in on the fun.
  - Baby may reach for your food or show his interest in what you are eating.
  - Baby can hold his head in a steady, upright position.
  - Baby can sit with support.
  - Baby is waking up in the night between feedings after several months of sleeping through the night.



- Feeding babies can be very messy. What important lessons are babies learning through this messy experience? What happens if a baby gets cereal in the bottle and doesn't get to experience the messiness?
- What have you heard about introducing solid foods to babies?
- What are signs that your baby gives you that they are full? Sample responses:
  - Baby may refuse food.
  - Baby may turn her head away from the spoon or knock the spoon away.
  - Baby may lose interest in food and start playing.

### **Connect:**

- We all know the tricks to get children to eat more food. Some things, like pretending the spoon is an airplane, add fun to mealtime. But do parents really need to encourage babies to eat? Is giving your baby a lot of food a way of showing love? Key concepts to affirm with parents:
  - Babies don't need encouragement to eat. They are born with the ability to monitor their fullness and will let parents know when they are done. The parents' job is to read their babies signals and stop feeding when baby is full.
  - Babies who associate large amounts of food with love may grow into overweight children and adults.
- Babies trust parents. What is your baby learning about trust when you allow her to decide how much she wants to eat? Sample responses:
  - Babies learn to trust parents to respect their feelings of fullness.
  - Babies trust parents and soon they begin to trust themselves.
  - Just as babies trust caregivers to know what foods to offer, parents need to trust babies to know how much their babies want to eat.
  - How will you feel when you know you did right by your baby by respecting their signs of fullness?
- What lessons about love are parents teaching their infants when they allow children to eat just until they decide they are full?

### **Act:**

- Have you noticed any signs that your baby is ready for solid food yet?
- What will you offer first?
- What are your plans to celebrate this exciting moment in your child's life? (Don't forget to capture the moment on camera!)

