

# GRADUATION

CLIENT	BEHAVIORS	TOOLS
Formula-fed babies, four to five months	Keeping baby off solid foods until 5 to 6 months old	“Life milestones” photos, “No cereal in the bottle” stickers

## TOOLS:



## OPENING ACTIVITY:

Lay the photos on the table.

Pick up the photo of a child getting on the school bus and say, “How will you feel when your child is going to school for the first time?” Pick up the photo of a child reading to her class and say, “Can you imagine how proud you will be when your child can read and succeed in school?” Pick up the photo of a child learning to ride a bike and say, “How you will feel when your child rides a bike alone for the first time?” Pick up the photo of graduation and ask, “Now, fast forward to graduation. Can you even imagine how you’ll feel when your child graduates?”

Listen to client response after each photo.

Show a photo of a baby in a graduation hat again.

**SAY:** “Graduating to solid foods is a big step in the first year. How do you feel about your baby being ready for solid foods in the coming weeks or months?”

**SAY:** “Every parent wants his or her children to be successful at whatever they do. An important part of success is being prepared for the challenge. Baby’s digestive system is still developing for the first five to six months, but there are three simple ways to know if your baby is ready for this important milestone.”

### Discuss signs of readiness for solid food.

**Baby is around 6 months old:** “Babies need to be able to keep solid food in their mouths and swallow it. That reflex isn’t ready until around 6 months old. That’s also when Baby’s digestive system is developed enough for solid food.”

**Baby can sit up and keep his head in a steady, upright position:** “Baby needs to be able to sit up and keep his head in a steady, upright position to accept food. If not, baby isn’t ready for solid food.”

**Baby has an interest in solid foods:** “Babies are amazing communicators. One way they let you know they are ready for solid food is they reach for food as you eat it. They may even try to grab for it.”

If parent has already started solid foods ask: “Would it be helpful to do a quick check to see if your baby is ready for solid foods? If not, it’s not too late to protect (baby’s name) digestive system by offering only breastmilk or formula for a few more weeks (or months). Your baby won’t even notice if you stop offering cereal or solid foods.”

**ASK:** “We talked about a lot of ways to prepare your child for the important milestone of starting solid foods. About when do you feel your baby will be ready for this milestone? What are your plans to celebrate the sweet memory of (baby’s name) first foods?”

Offer: Show “no cereal” stickers to client and ask her to choose her favorites. Tell her the stickers are a fun way to let the world know she is protecting her baby from cereal and solid food before 6 months old. Suggest placing them on her bottles, refrigerator, diaper bag, etc.

Sample dialogue:

“It seems that everyone has advice on when to feed solid foods and cereal— and some of that advice can be harmful. These stickers can help declare your decision and maybe even prevent or shorten unwanted advice. It also opens the door for greater respect for you as a mom because it shows that you know what you’re doing and that you’re taking a stand to protect your baby. Take as many stickers as you want.”