Today’s piece was prepared by Hailey Nelson, MS4 and is based on an article in Time entitled “Skip the strained peas. Let babies feed themselves.”

<http://healthland.time.com/2012/02/10/skip-the-strained-peas-let-babies-feed-themselves/?xid=gonewsedit>

The author reports the results of a study published in *BMJ Open*, where parents were surveyed about feeding and weaning practices, food preferences, and growth. They looked at the eating patterns of 155 children from age 20 months to 6 ½ years and report, on average, the children who as babies finger-fed themselves were at a healthy weight compared to the spoon-fed infants who were more likely to be overweight or obese. The article encourages parents to put down the spoon and let babies and toddlers serve themselves.

Strengths of the article include relevance to parents with infants who are starting to consider solid foods and to pediatricians who counsel families on infant nutrition. A weakness of the study is that it was a retrospective questionnaire parental recall may bias the results. A drawback to this article is that after discouraging spoon feeding of the typical puree type baby food the article does not offer enough guidance as to what steps parents should take in feeding their children. The introduction of solid foods can be a confusing and challenging time compared to the simplicity of breast or bottle feeding. Signs a baby is ready to start solid foods (of any kind) include being able to sit upright without support in a high chair and loss of the tongue thrust reflex. It is important that food pieces-if not pureed-are small enough to not be a choking hazard. Remember that no matter what form of food is introduced, an important source of nutrition in the first year of life is still breast milk or formula.

**RESOURCES ON NUTRITION**For familiesHealthychildren.org

* Switching to solid foods
  + http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/pages/Switching-To-Solid-Foods.aspx
* Working Together: Breastfeeding and Solid Foods
  + http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/pages/Working-Together-Breastfeeding-and-Solid-Foods.aspx

For Providers  
Article (full text) http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/2/1/e000298.full

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!