

The Mealtime Map

For babies under one • Pause → Observe → Follow → Respond

Most mealtime struggles before age one are development, not defiance. Keep this near the highchair.

Pause

Before reacting to food refusal, mess, or fussing, take one breath. Nothing needs an instant response.

Observe

Tired, teething, overstimulated, or just full? At this age, mealtime chaos is a body signal, not a behavior choice.

Follow

Let their cue guide the next move. Turning away means done, not defiant.

Respond

Calm and boundaried: "All done? Let's clean up." Connection and structure, together.

Boundaries with connection: you are not choosing between the two. • chikabebe.com