

## Moving on from...bottles

Speech and language therapists, dietitians, dentists and other professionals recommend stopping bottle use from 12 months and moving on to open cups instead.

Children who do not use bottles long term:

- have better appetites
- are more likely to develop strong healthy mouth muscles needed for speech
- are less likely to experience dental problems as their second teeth develop

### Tips for moving on from bottles:

#### *For children under 2*

This is the best time to try moving on from using a bottle as its use has not yet become a habit!

- Reduce bottle use gradually to certain times of the day, e.g. just before bed, or
- Decide on a day to stop bottle use completely and stick to it! Choose a week where things are as calm as possible at home – avoid stressful or busy times to make it easier for you and your baby!
- Once you have given up the bottle don't go back to using it; it is confusing for your baby and will make it harder to give up in the long run. Give drinks in an open cup instead (see tips for moving on to open cups)

#### *For children over 2*

- Reduce bottle use gradually by limiting to certain times of the day, or
- Decide on a day to give up completely. Choose a time you know you will be able to focus on helping your child through giving up their bottle

They will, by now, be developing a dependency on their bottle. Think about how you can best support them:

- Keep them busy! Lots of trips out and playing together to keep them distracted from thinking about their bottle
- Give plenty of cuddles, songs, and stories to calm and soothe them instead
- Go shopping together for a new cup
- Give them lots of praise and cuddles for moving on
- Show them how brilliant they are. Have some motivating rewards handy – some children love stickers; others may prefer a trip to the park or a small toy. Start by rewarding after one day, then after three, then after five and again after another five

Remember – only give milk or water in bottles. Children should not be given a bottle to go to bed with, they will rely on it as part of their sleep routine and it can cause dental decay – you should always brush your child's teeth last thing before they go to bed.

