

# Thinking about... Bottles

# And Cups

## When should children start to use an open cup?

- It is safe from birth, even for premature babies
- Start encouraging an open cup from 6 months

### Open cups help children to...

- Develop a stable jaw
- Use a bigger range of tongue movements.

These skills are also needed for speech sound development.



## What about bottles and lidded cups?

These should be discouraged after 1 year because...

- If they contain formula milk or sugary drinks they can cause **tooth decay**.
- Spouts and teats can **prevent tongue movements** that are needed for using an open cup and speech sound development.
- They discourage children from developing a stable jaw.
- There is **increased risk of infection**. Lids and spouts are easily contaminated when left around.



# How can I help my baby to use an open cup?

Use a small cup that hold 1-2 oz (medicine cups are ideal) and fill it at least half full.

Tuck a bib/cloth under the chin to absorb drips and make sure the baby is seated upright and is well supported.

Hold the cup to baby's lips and tilt it until the liquid reaches the lips. Be patient...allow baby to lap/sip the liquid and swallow at their own pace.

Don't pour it in the mouth...baby should be in control.

A thicker liquid (e.g. fruit smoothies, yoghurt drink and milkshakes) may be better to start with as it's easier to control.



Baby may cough or gasp for breath initially, as they are used to sucking for long periods before breathing, but they soon learn to take 2-3 laps/sips and then pause for a breath.