

Speech Delays and Sippy Cups Use



Talk With Me
Early Language Services

Traditional sippy cups (hard spout) are not recommended. The next transition recommended after breast/bottle is to learn to drink from an open cup with the help of an adult. You can introduce an open cup as early as 6 months.

- Research shows that sippy cup use does not support the healthy development of oral motor skills. The use of sippy cups encourages babies to continue the infant suckling pattern, rather than develop an adult-like swallow.
- When used in excess, the traditional sippy cup can lead to developmental changes in the tongue, which can further lead to speech sound production problems or a swallowing problem known as “tongue thrust” later on.
- Tooth decay and ear infections may result when the sippy cup contains milk or juice, and is used as a pacifier at bedtime.
- Note: full transition from bottle to cup for all fluids should happen no later than 18 months.



If no spill is necessary, sippy cups with a straw opening are recommended. Drinking from a straw can:

- Help support oral motor development and dental health.
- Improve the strength of the lips, cheeks, and tongue; these movements are important for speech development.
- Note: 360° no-spill cups are ok to use.

