

Simplify the transition from bottle to cup with a little creative thinking.



somewhere there's a magic cup
that will make
your child's bottle vanish

KARLENE'S STORY: "I'm proud my child made the transition from bottle to cup"

"For me, feeding my baby is all about love. I love our talk time together, even when no words are spoken. I love cuddling. Most of all, I love having a baby who depends on me for everything. The bottle was a source of comfort for me as well as my baby.

Karyanah-Faith is my last child. When the doctor suggested weaning her to a cup at six months, I resented the idea. After all, that meant my baby was growing up. So what's wrong with keeping a child on a bottle until two or older?

After days of sulking, I realized I was being selfish. I'm a mother, and mothers help their child reach milestones. They celebrate independence, not foster dependence. And they always protect their child. I realized that my child was depending on me for everything—including knowing how to protect her teeth from baby bottle tooth decay.

So I started the transition from bottle to cup. First, I gave her empty cups to play with for a few days. No need to buy special cups—regular cups work. I first introduced the cup at the midday meal. (Karyanah-Faith still loved

to be cuddled when she first woke up and at bedtime.) I still held her in my lap while offering the cup.

It wasn't a big deal. I just keep offering the cup every day. After a few weeks, I introduced it at breakfast and then dinner. One day, at around 14 or 15 months, she was off the bottle. It was probably more traumatic for me than her.

I did learn a few tricks that made the transition easier. Simple things like squiggly straws take the focus off the cup. Songs like "For She's A Big Girl Now" (sung to the tune of "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow") make it an adventure. And we revert to the bottle during stressful times like when Karyanah-Faith was sick or changed daycare.

I'm proud that my child has made the transition from bottle to cup. Being bottle-free means I don't have to worry about rotten teeth or getting too much milk. And best of all, when Karyanah-Faith hits the terrible twos we'll have one less thing to fight about—until we start toilet training."

Karlene's tips for easy bottle to cup transition.

- Use the bottle only for feeding. Don't allow her to walk around or play with the bottle.
- Never allow her to take the bottle to bed.
- Offer water in the cup if your baby is thirsty at night.
- Make juice an occasional treat during weaning—but never in the bottle.
- Provide other forms of comfort like singing, reading and playing.



Karlene and Karyanah-Faith



For more information about infant oral health please visit: <http://www.ct.gov/dph/homebyone>
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