

Sippy Cups

Drinking from a cup is a skill that children learn over time, which means that you shouldn't expect your child to master the technique the first time you offer a cup.

As early as 6 months, babies can be given a "sippy cup" to drink from. Nowadays, many of the cups have valves to prevent spills. At 6-9 months of age, however, the valve also requires too much of a suction for most babies, so save the valve for later and expect spills.

As for a daily routine, you can offer your baby a cup with each feeding. Water, juice, breastmilk or formula are all fine to use. Many parents try to get rid of the bottle and switch exclusively to a cup between 12 and 15 months (to coincide with the switch to whole (or 2%) milk at a year.

While this works well in that the total "milk" requirement decreases to around 16 ounces of whole milk a day, children who have only been offered juice or water from a cup don't always make the transition well when they find their cups "contaminated" with milk. Therefore, in addition to allowing your child plenty of time to refine her "sippy cup skills", I recommend offering breastmilk or formula right from the start when you introduce the cup.