

Guide to Straws and Cups

As your child grows, so do their oral motor skills. Infants and babies move their tongue in a forward-backward motion, called a suck-suckle pattern. This is an important movement when trying to drink formula or breast milk from a nipple. Around the age of six months to one year, toddlers should begin developing a more mature swallowing pattern. The tongue tip will move up to the roof of their mouth behind the front teeth and will move in a wave pattern to swallow more advanced textures. With the introduction of more solid foods, the tongue will also begin to move side to side for chewing. Prolonged use of bottles, pacifiers, and hard-spouted sippy cups can prevent children from developing these oral motor skills that are critical for feeding and speech development.

When should cups be introduced?

Babies can start practicing with open cups around the age of 6-months. They can drink small amounts of water or breast milk. Avoid juice, unless used for constipation (prune, pear, purple grape diluted with water at pediatrician's discretion).

How should cups be introduced?

Typically, children do best learning to take small sips of liquid from an open cup and then graduate to a straw cup. Every child is different so introduce cup drinking based on recommendations from your feeding therapist.

What about mess?

- Getting messy is SO IMPORTANT for little ones!
- Practice with cup drinking in the bathtub
- Only offer a small amount of water in the cup at a time and help your child set the cup down on their tray between sips
- When starting, offer the cup after your child has finished their food – avoid soggy food all over the highchair tray

Important components of an open-cup or straw cup:

- Soft or semi-soft rim / straw
- Easy to hold for small hands
- Avoid hard spouts, bottle nipples, and straws you need to bite



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Below you will find a list of some of the open cups and straws that we love. This is not a complete list – there are so many options out there! If you have questions or concerns about the specific cup that you are using, reach out to your feeding therapist for advice.

| Recommended Open Cups | | |
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|  |  |  |
| EZPZ mini cup | eZtotZ Tough to Tip plastic open cup | Munchkin 4-piece multi-cups open cup |
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| Munchkin Miracle 360 Sippy Cup | Munchkin Splash toddler cups with training lids | Dr. Brown's Cheers 360 Spoutless training cup |

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|  |  |  |
| Reflo Smart Cup | OXO Tot cup with non-slip grip | Nuby Drinking Tumblers |
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| Tommee Tippee Easiflow 360 spill-proof toddler cup | Tommee Tippee Easiflow 360 training cup | Philips Avent My Natural drinking cup |
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| Nosey Cup (3 sizes) | Bambini Bear SippyCup Mug for toddlers | Doidy cup |

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| Recommended Straw Cups | | |
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|  |  |  |
| The First Years Take & Toss straw cup | Arrow Sip A Cup with built in straw | Munchkin Weighted Straw trainer cup |
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| Lollaland Weighted Straw Sippy Cup | Dr. Brown's Baby's First Straw Cup | TalkTools Honey Bear Drinking Cup |
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| Abilitations Mr Juice Bear Straw Drinking Cup | Boon SNUG Straw Lids | |