Training Cups

It's a milestone worthy of celebration: your baby is graduating from bottles! According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, your toddler should be ready to move on from the breast or bottle at between 12 months.

While your child may not be ready for a regular cup right away, there are a number of training cups you can use to help them move from baby to big kid.

What Type of Training Cup to Use

While it's tempting to purchase a "no spill" cup, these are essentially baby bottles with a different design. The aim is to shift from sucking to sipping. No-spill cups have a valve that stops spills and the only way your child can drink from a no-spill cup is to suck, not sip.

To help your child learn how to sip, look for training cups with the following:

- A cup with a snap-on or screw-on lid that has a spout, but no valve
- Training cups with two handles
- Training cups with weighted bases to keep them upright and to cut down on spills

Where and When Your Child Is Using Training Cups

Like any new skill your baby works on, learning how to use a regular cup will take time, practice and patience on both of your parts! To help ease them into the habit, use a training cup with water between meals or when you're on-the-go.

Mealtimes are a good time to start working with your child on sipping from real cups. Limit spills by starting with small amounts of water or milk in cups your child can comfortably hold. Cups with two handles or small paper cups can be great starter tools.

And toddlers are called "toddlers" for a reason, so don't let your child walk and sip at the same time to avoid a mouth injury.

Once the day is done, don't let your child go to bed with any kind of cup unless it's filled with water. Letting sugary drinks pool in your child's mouth overnight can lead to cavities.