



CHARTING THE FUTURE™

The Lactation Center of Lancaster County

Revised 2020

Bottle Training the Breastfed Baby

Bottle feeding considerations:

- Some babies will get "lazy" and prefer the bottle.
- Some styles of nipples will encourage "biting" behavior at the breast.
- If introduced too early, some babies may not learn how to breastfeed correctly. Breastfeeding and bottle feeding are not the same.
- Babies draw milk out of the breast. When you put a bottle in the mouth a baby must swallow or "choke". To not choke, they must learn to push the tongue up and down to handle flow.

Training recommendations:

- Wait 2-4 weeks or at least 1 week after the baby is breastfeeding **well**.
- It is recommended that someone other than Mom should do the "training".
- Preferred nipple shape is "broad-based", which allows flanging of the lips.
- Nipple size - slow flow, first stage, newborn or step one. For many babies, this is the only size you will need.
- Bottle type does not matter despite the advertisement. Always keep fluid in the neck of the bottle.
- Start with 3/4 to 1 ounce of milk. Train between or after a feeding until your baby learns how to manage flow.
- Do not "fight" with the baby.
- After training, learn satiation signs by slowly increasing the amount in the bottle to a full feeding amount.
- Once "trained", offer a minimum of 1-2 bottles each week to keep the baby used to the bottle for less chance of refusal issues.

Paced bottle feeding:

- Feed **when the baby's cues indicate hunger**, rather than on a schedule.
- Hold the baby in an upright position. Do not bottle feed a baby lying down flat. Do not bottle-prop. Do not leave a baby unattended. This will help prevent choking and middle ear infections. Keep the bottle horizontal.
- Switch holding the baby from one side to the other side midway through a feed. This provides for eye stimulation and development. It also discourages the development of side preference which can impact breastfeeding.
- The feeding should take **10-20 minutes**. Care providers should make appropriate quantities last the average length of a feeding, rather than trying to feed as much as they can in as short a time as possible. This time element is significant because the infant's system needs time to recognize satiety before the stomach has a chance to get over-filled.
- Gently allow the baby to draw the nipple into their mouth. Stroke the baby's lips from top to bottom with the nipple to promote a rooting response for a wide-open mouth. Allow the baby to "accept" the nipple rather than pushing it in.
- Allow frequent pauses while the baby drinks from the bottle to mimic the breastfeeding mother's let-down patterns. This discourages the baby from drinking too much and helps prevent nipple confusion or preference.
- Feed the baby to satiation. If the baby is dozing off and releasing the bottle nipple before the bottle is empty, that means the baby is done; do not reawaken the baby to "finish."

Benefits of paced bottle feeding:

- The baby will eat the amount they need for their age instead of overfeeding.
- Gas and reflux will be less.
- Less fussiness or refusal of breast.