



## AAP NEWS PARENT PLUS

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Avoid bottle, binky and thumb battles

**Taking baby steps can help children adjust when weaning from bottles, pacifiers and thumb sucking.**

#### Bottles

At around 8 to 12 months, your baby will begin learning how to feed him or herself. This is a natural time to begin transitioning from a bottle to a cup.

While some children adapt quickly to the new routine, others may take up to six months before taking all liquids from a cup.

Following are tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on how parents can introduce a cup:

- To minimize spills, use a trainer cup with two handles and a snap-on lid with a spout or use small plastic cups.
- Start off by filling the cup with water, offering it at just one meal per day. Show your child how to bring the cup to his or her mouth and tip it so he or she can drink.
- Gradually replace cups for bottle feedings, making the bed-

time bottle the last feeding to be dropped. Substitute milk with water in the nighttime bottle, then make the transition to offering the water in a cup.

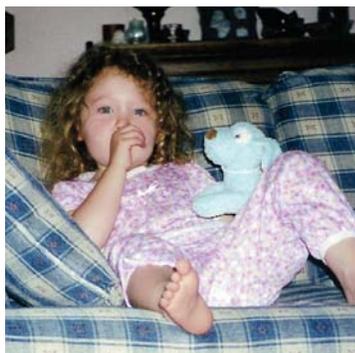
#### Pacifiers and thumbs

Children usually give up the pacifier on their own between 2 and 4 years of age. Thumb and finger sucking should be discouraged by the time a child is 6 to 8 years of age. Before that age, thumb and finger sucking will not cause permanent damage to the teeth or mouth, according to the AAP.

Although many children eventually will give up the thumb sucking or pacifier habit on their own, some can use encouragement.

Experts advise parents to:

- Praise and reward the child when he or she does not use a pacifier or suck on his or her



thumb. Star charts and daily rewards also are helpful.

- Keep bored hands busy and distract the child with other interesting activities.
- Ask the pediatrician or pediatric dentist to check the roof of the child's mouth and teeth for any changes.

— Trisha Koriath