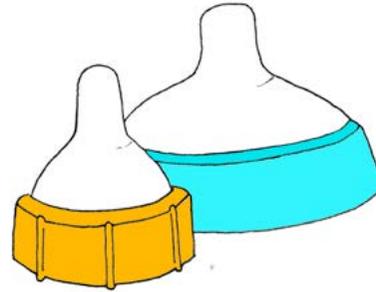


# Baby-led Bottle Feeding

Baby-led bottle feeding is a safe and pleasant way for a small baby to eat. The baby will be able to control the amount he eats and experiences less stress. It is important to follow and respond to the baby's cues during feedings. Babies give out subtle hunger cues: rooting, turning their head side to side, opening their mouth, licking their lips and taking their hands to their mouth. You should not wait for the baby to cry as it is the final hunger cue. A crying baby may be too agitated to eat and needs time to calm down.



← A good bottle nipple should resemble a real nipple: soft, straight and slow-flowing.

→ You should always hold the baby during feedings. Hold the baby sitting upright supported by your arm or lying on his side on top of your thighs. Switch sides between feedings: support the baby alternately on your left or right arm. Switching sides boosts the baby's development.



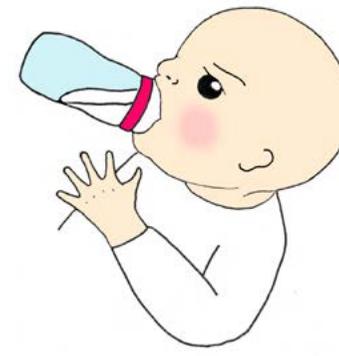
**1** Gently place the nipple of the bottle against your baby's lips, wait for the baby to start rooting and open his mouth. Never force the bottle into the baby's mouth, but wait for him to latch on.



**2** Do not let any milk flow into the nipple just yet. Let the baby suck on the empty nipple for about a minute, just as he would do at the breast to trigger let down.



**3** Tilt the bottle to allow milk flow into the nipple. The baby will suck and swallow at his own pace with some breaks in between for breathing.



**4** Maintain eye contact during feeding. If milk flows too quickly or feeding feels uncomfortable, the baby will display **stress signs**.



**5** If you notice any stress signs or the baby pauses sucking for a longer time, tilt the bottle back to empty the nipple and make sure that the nipple does not touch the baby's palate. If the baby wants to continue eating, he will resume sucking shortly. The baby stops rooting and sucking once he is full.

## Gas?

When the baby sucks on an empty nipple, he is not swallowing. When you take your time feeding and follow the baby's cues, the baby will swallow less air with his milk. Positioning the baby upright helps most of the air get out through the nose during feeding.

## Stress signs:

- wrinkled brow, worried expression,
- fingers or toes splayed out,
- milk running out of the corner of the mouth,
- rapid swallowing and noisy gulping,
- gasping for air, panting,
- trying to turn head away or push the bottle away.

*Bottle feeding is cooperation and pleasant interaction with your baby. Baby always needs an adult to feed him and read his cues. Never leave a baby to eat alone from a propped bottle.*

