

We advocate for a technique named paced bottle feeding when it comes to feeding your baby a bottle, where this is combined with breastfeeding or if you are exclusively bottle feeding. It is a beautiful way to practice cued care and to element a tool to dial baby down.

Paced feeding is not necessarily the way you see babies fed with a bottle on TV or in a movie. In contrast, baby is quite upright and the bottle is horizontal, to encourage baby to draw the teat into their mouth to make contact with their soft palate (the squishy part at the back of the roof of the mouth if you run your tongue along it). We encourage you to have your arm well supported, so baby has their spine in a stable and vertically aligned position. Baby's chin should not be tilted towards its chest and occasionally your pinky finger can be helpful in supporting the chin of a premature or low tone baby. It is beneficial to become familiar with feeding baby using a different supporting arm each time.

During a paced bottle feed, we encourage you to make eye contact with your baby and observe their cues. If baby is becoming unsettled, take a break. There is a desperation to get a "full feed" into a baby, especially with expressed breast milk but sometimes babies just want a small snack rather than a three course meal! Babies that are paced bottle fed are much more likely to feed to appetite, rather than chug an entire bottle before realising that they are full! If baby pauses during a paced bottle feed, bring the teat down to give them a break. This is mimicking the flow during a breast feed, babies often take breaks to control the feed themselves.

Narrow neck teats are recommended to facilitate paced bottle feeding as it is much more likely to have the teat deep in baby's mouth. We recommend a newborn teat, even for an older baby. There is no absolute amount that your baby will take each time, sometimes it is useful to add milk to the bottle in small amounts to avoid having to waste it.

