

WHY?

Responsive bottle feeding is used to encourage your baby's natural feeding skills. We call it "responsive" because the feed focuses on your baby's communication and your responses to them. We want to make sure your baby is your **feeding partner**. They do the work of feeding while you respond to their needs.

Video: "Responsive Bottle Feeding" by MidYorkNHS

B A S I C S

POSITION OF BABY

UPRIGHT OR ELEVATED SIDE-LYING

These positions help with breathing, swallowing & control. See our handout on Elevated Side-Lying.

CONTROL

YOUR BABY SHOULD CONTROL THE PACE

You control the bottle but your baby controls the rest (latching on, feeding & breaks).

POSITION OF THE BOTTLE

PARALLEL WITH THE FLOOR

Your baby should be the one taking milk out of the bottle. We want to avoid them swallowing milk just because it is being dripped into their mouth. You should see a little air in the nipple.

RESPONDING TO BABY

LEARNING WHAT THEY NEED IN THE FEED

Babies can tell you when they are ready to latch, need a break, want to keep going or when they are done. It will take time and practice to learn your baby's signs.

BODY & BOTTLE LATCHING

Babies have certain reflexes for feeding that work for latching to a body or a bottle. Families who have a goal to improve breast/chest latching can use bottle feeding as a chance to practice latching instincts.

- Touch the nipple to the skin between their upper lip and nose.
- They will open their mouth and turn their head side-to-side.
 - Keep the bottle steady and ideally, touching their face.
- When they open their mouth wider or lean forward to latch, bring the bottle into their mouth.
 - Try to keep the nipple along the top of their mouth more than their tongue.
- Allow them to "stimulate milk" by suckling on an empty nipple before tipping the milk into the nipple.
 - It may only be 2 suckles, it might be 10! Follow their patience.
- When they stop suckling, gently untip the bottle to let them just breathe.
- When they start suckling again, return milk to the nipple and let them drink.

SIGNS TO *Slow the Flow*

Sometimes your baby may need help to slow down their feed. Here are some signs you can look for:

- 3+ swallows without breathing,
- Leaking milk,
- Furrowing the brow,
- Eyes going wide/looking surprised,
- Squeaking noises as they breathe,
- Coughing, sputtering "choking",
- Arms or legs going stiff.
- Shaking their head side-to-side while drinking (not before they've latching),
- Trying to pull their head away.

Disclaimer: These handouts are for general use to support families. Specific content on our handouts is not intended as medical advice from any of the physicians or staff at Village Lactation. Thank you for understanding. June 2024