



Preschool Hotline Newsletter

Fall & Winter 2016 Edition

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Contacts:

Northwest

Haida Gwaii	250-626-4715
Prince Rupert	250-622-6380
Terrace	250-631-4233
Smithers	250-847-6400

Northern Interior

Prince George	250-565-7370
Quesnel	250-983-6810

Northeast:

Please contact your nearest Child Development Center in Fort St. John or Dawson Creek

Another Fall has arrived which means Winter is just around the corner. This time of year brings images of food, gatherings and times spent with family and friends.

Food, drinks and language – not always topics that go together but language and communication can be linked with everything. And in this issue our articles are about our mouth and our teeth and language development.

Settle in and have a read on the use of soothers and speech development and discover how easy it is to use books on food for language development. We are also excited to have a guest writer join this edition with an article on the great debate of open cup versus sippy cup use.

As always please connect with your local Speech Language Pathologist if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's speech or language development or look for us under Public Health at northernhealth.ca.

Happy Fall and Winter thoughts!
- From your Northern Health
Community Speech & Language Team



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Reference: 10-407-6004

Helping Your Child Embrace the Open Cup

Emilia Moulechkova, Population Health Dietitian

Sippy cups are popular with parents and preschoolers alike. Many parents find comfort in knowing that there will be less mess with these spill-proof cups. They sure are handy for families on the go! But did you know that drinking from an open cup, rather than a sippy cup, helps kids develop good tongue movements needed for speech? It may also encourage more communication and interaction, helping kids learn new sounds and words! There are also worries about dental health and nutrition if kids have regular access to sippy cups with drinks other than water. When kids carry around their sippy cups (as they often do) they tend to sip their drink over long periods of time, leading to cavities and ruined appetites.

So, how do families balance this information with the realities of everyday life? Adults play an important role in deciding what drinks to offer kids and the manner in which they are offered. Many parents find it helpful to try limiting the use of sippy cups for times when mess is an issue, like on your neighbour's new white carpet! Or, try filling sippy cups with plain water, rather than juice or milk, to help prevent cavities. Whether it's an open cup or a sippy cup, children do best with regular, sit-down meal and snacks and water in between to satisfy thirst.



The following are some tips to help encourage the use of open-cups:

- Remove the valve on the sippy cup to help children learn to drink without sucking.
- Use small cups that are easier for children to hold.
- Bring home a new, special cup or let your child pick one out from the store.
- Sit and eat with your child so they can see you drink from an open cup.
- Avoid distractions such as toys, TV, or computers when eating or drinking to help your child focus on the task at hand.

With your example, and lots of chances to learn, children will master and enjoy drinking from an open cup in no time!

Breaking the Habit: Thumb-Sucking and Pacifiers

Sucking on a thumb or using a pacifier are common childhood habits. But when is a child too old? In general, prolonged thumb-sucking or pacifier use (past the age of 4) can lead to dental and speech problems. Typically, infants are born with a forward tongue position and as they get older the tongue moves back. Extended sucking on a thumb or a pacifier can prevent the tongue from moving back. As the tongue rests between the upper and lower teeth it creates an opening which can affect dentition and speech sounds. This forward tongue position can also prevent a child from learning mature tongue movements required for certain speech sounds.

On average, children grow out of thumb-sucking or using a pacifier by the age of 3. Some children need help to break the habit. If you are concerned about your child's thumb-sucking or pacifier use, here are a few ideas to help:

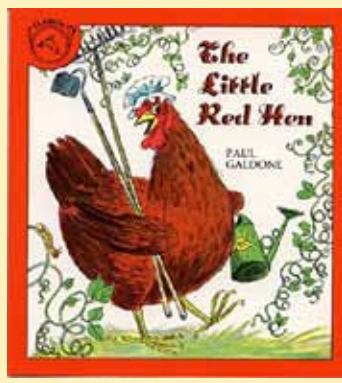
- Limit the times in the day in which your child can have a pacifier or suck on his or her thumb. For example, you might allow your child to have a pacifier only at nap time or bedtime.
- Seek out other ways for your child to soothe himself or herself. Your child may have a favorite blanket or toy to provide comfort.
- Provide lots of praise when your child is engaged in activities without sucking his or her thumb or using a pacifier.
- Explain to your child that giving up thumb-sucking or a pacifier is helping him or her to have healthy teeth and good speech.
- Have patience – Giving up a habit is hard work and does not happen overnight.

Food for Thought!

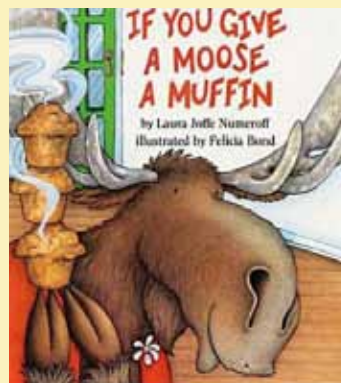
Some children's books with a food theme.



The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear
By Audrey Wood and Don Wood



The Little Red Hen
By Paul Galdone



If You Give a Moose a Muffin
By Laura Numeroff



Bear Wants More
By Karma Wilson

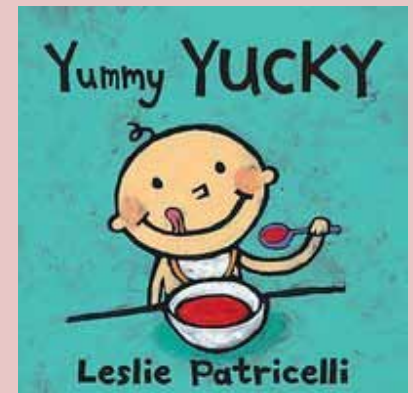
Food Books and Tips While Reading

Young children learn all kinds of skills while looking through books with adults. Talking is a skill, and this is one of the most important skills they are learning. Looking at a book with a child is a fun, easy and effective way to talk with your child. Books expose us to new words and teach us how to look and listen, respond and ask questions, link ideas, and share experiences. It's ok if you don't end up reading the words in the book, talking with your child is the main goal of book reading at this age. Children, after all, must learn language before they learn how to read.

Food words are some of the first words children learn. It's no surprise, then, that food-themed books offer many opportunities to talk with your child using back and forth conversations. Here are some food-themed books and tips on how to create an interactive experience.

Yummy YUCKY by *Leslie Patricia* – Great for Toddlers

- Pick a calm time to read, such as after bath time or before bedtime.
- Make 'yummy' and 'yucky' faces while reading the story.
- Talk about yummy and yucky objects in the room: "Shoes are yucky."
- Use short complete sentences to comment on pictures: "He likes fish sticks."
- During mealtime use words from the book: "Carrots are yummy."
- Let your toddler lead. If she points to a picture, talk about what she points to.



The Very Hungry Caterpillar by *Eric Carle* – Great for Toddlers-Preschoolers

- Let your child flip the pages and poke their fingers through the holes.
- Point to pictures as you say the words: "Caterpillar" "Cherry pie" "Salami"
- When reading repetitive sentences, pause and let your child fill in the blank: "On Wednesday, he ate through three plums, but he was still ____."
- Help your child learn new vocabulary by giving a simple definition of the new word and relating the word to something in their life: "Cocoon. A cocoon is a blanket the caterpillar makes. He wraps himself in it. Your blankie is like a cocoon."
- Act out parts of the story:
 - Pretend to eat and make funny eating noises.
 - Crawl on the floor like a, "big fat caterpillar."
 - Fly out of a cocoon like a, "beautiful butterfly."

