There are many reasons why parents do not switch their child from the bottle to a cup, but there are even better reasons why parents should take the bottle away.

WEANING FROM THE BOTTLE

Staying on the bottle too long can:

- Decay a child’s teeth and cause pain. This “Baby Bottle Tooth Decay” can hurt adult teeth before they even come in.
- Decrease your child’s appetite for other foods.
  - Cause ear infections.
  - Cause overweight.

If your child is over one year old and still on the bottle, here are somethings you can do to make weaning work.

- It’s important to keep the bottles out of reach and out of sight. Make sure your child will not find them.
- Praise your child when he or she uses a cup. Tell your child what a “big girl” or “big boy” he or she is.
  - Start a new bedtime routine. Give a cup of milk or a snack. Wipe or brush your child’s teeth.
  - Read a story. Make it a special, loving time because your child is going through a big change.
  - When your child demands your attention or acts up in public, offer toys, blankets, or hugs for comfort (not bottles).
- Avoid using no-spill cups. Never use them as pacifiers and don’t allow your child to drink from them all the time, throughout the day or in bed.
- Use “special” or fun looking cups for milk, juice, and water. Offer water instead of juice between meals.
- Tell grandparents, childcare providers, family and friends why it is important to wean your child off of the bottle. Ask them to offer support and attention to your child, not bottles.