

### Tips to reducing Pacifier and/or Thumb Sucking

When it comes to decreasing and eliminating pacifier use and/or thumb sucking remembering to have patience is the key to success! Sometimes this journey is a difficult process for not only the child but for the parent as well.

*Here are a few tips to help make the journey a little easier. . .*

1. **Be Consistent!** Consistency is the key to making sure your child is successful at eliminating their habit. For example: If you plan to take the pacifier away at nap time, be sure that every naptime the pacifier is no longer available.
2. **Everyone on Board!** To make this a successful journey everyone in the household or out of the household (i.e. grandparents, babysitters, etc.) will have to be informed of the new changes and be willing to participate with the new routine.
3. **Out of Sight, Out of Mind!** Sometimes going all in is the way to go. Removing all pacifiers in the home will reduce frequent reminders to the child and will not be a temptation to the parent to “give in” if things get a little rough.
4. **Get some help!** If your older child is struggling to rid themselves of thumb sucking finding a Certified Orofacial Myologist may help. There are specific programs that can be implemented with the help of a Certified Professional to make the transition more smoothly.
5. **Go for Comfort!** When eliminating a habit whether pacifier or thumb sucking it is best to offer an alternative. Find something comforting to your child (i.e. blanket, lovie, stuffed toy, etc.) that can take the place or provide comfort to the child during the transition process.
6. **Distraction!** If your child is a finger or thumb sucker, make sure to keep their hands busy during the day. This can include coloring, playing, creating something, blowing bubbles, building blocks or Legos, puzzles, etc. This will reduce idle time which a child would otherwise place his/her fingers and thumb in their mouth.
7. **Go for Rewards!** Older children will be more motivated to earn a reward for their success. Making a reward charts to track progress will not only motivate a child as they see their success but have something to look forward to as goals are reached.

