

## Time to Get Rid of the Pacifier?

Passies, Binkies, Woobies, everyone has an affectionate terms for them, but whatever you call them, pacifiers are one of those debates that all parents have an opinion on. Either you love them or you hate them. We love them! My older daughters loved them too, but our third would not take the passy (no matter many times I stuck the thing in her mouth and held it there).

I love pacifiers because they can help calm down, comfort and sooth (aka: pacify) a child in an instant. It is a proven fact that babies have a need to suck until they are 6 months old. Some babies suck their thumbs, some suck a blanket and some don't suck on anything.

Many dentists will tell you that pacifiers make the child's teeth crooked, but it is hard to care about what might be, when something can make your baby stop crying in an instant. If you take the pacifier away by 1 or 2 years old, their teeth are fine. Neither of my passy lovers have buck teeth. We have proof! And there are even stiduiies that sya that pacifier use decreases the incidence of SIDS !

When our oldest daughter was 2 years old, the pediatrician said it was time to say goodbye to the binkie. We were all devastated! How were we going to get this thing that she LOVED so much away from her? How would she survive? How would WE survive? There was no easy way to do it.

After several days of trying to take the passy away and then succumbing to the pressure of our daughter in angst, we gave in and gave it back to her. Big mistake! This became quite a painful process, for all of us. Fortunately, it was such a painful process that by the time our second child had to go through the ritual of giving up the passy, we had it down. So, here are some words of wisdom (backed by experience) for those of you who are saying your farewells to the passy.

- First of all, it is important to prepare your child for the departure of their beloved friend. Talk about the fact that in one week, passy is going to go away and you will be having a going away party for it. Talk about it every day (not all day, of course, but make sure you mention it once or twice- especially at bedtime).

- Mark the date on the calendar and discuss with all caregivers- parents, grandparents, babysitters- that this is the LAST day this child will ever have a binkie in his or her mouth! Grandparents hate to see their grandchild cry and often give in under this type of pressure, so make sure they commit to it!

- Have your child decorate a brown bag that will contain all of the pacifiers in your posession. Explain to your child that this will be their pacifiers' new home.

- Gather ALL pacifiers - from the crib, dishwasher, diaper bags, toy boxes, wherever they might be- and make sure there are NO pacifiers left in the house on THE day. Have your child kiss them goodbye if he or she isn't too upset. Then, place them in the bag and say goodbye.

- Put the bag in the recycling container and sing a song to say goodbye "Bye Bye, Binkie" (or whatever your child wants to sing). And DO NOT under any circumstances, ever let your child have a passy again, or it will be even more traumatic for your little one (and you), I promise.

- Now, bake a cake or cookies or do something to celebrate and give a positive experience to the day, in honor of the Pacifier Party. This will help give remind your child that their friend has a new home and this is a good thing. The more positive energy you can put into the farewell celebration, the better.

And there you have it. I am not saying this is going to be easy. In fact, I can almost promise you it won't! But, if you give your child a positive experience to commemorate this milestone, you will at least increase the odds of making the whole experience somewhat enjoyable! Again, here is an instance where being consistent is key! Once you say goodbye to the pacifier, that's it. Never go back! You will eventually have to say goodbye to the thing anyway, so if you do it one time, that will be a lot easier on everyone. Good luck!

And please let me know if you try the Passy Party. I'd love to hear your feedback!