A training drinking cup is provided having a sipping rim that is configured to prevent spillage when drinking contents from the cup.
TRAINING DRINKING CUP

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/650,434, filed on May 22, 2012, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The field generally relates to a drinking cup that is used to train a child how to drink properly from a cup without spilling the contents thereof and, store specifically, to a training drinking cup having a sipping rim that is configured to prevent spillage when drinking contents from the cup.

BACKGROUND

[0003] When first learning how to drink from a cup, children will typically use a sucking action from what they learned to do when sucking liquid from a nipple of a bottle. For example, young children weaning off a bottle typically use what is referred to as a “Sippy” cup, which generally has a lid with a spout extending therefrom. These “Sippy” cup designs typically have some mechanism, such as a valve mechanism inside the cup, which prevents liquid from spilling out from the spout when the cup is inverted or horizontal. A child must suck on the spout to draw the liquid contained within the cup.

[0004] While “Sippy” cups assist a child in moving forward in his or her development toward, using a drinking cup, these cups do not help a child develop the ability to drink from a standard cup, that is, a cup that does not require a sucking action. This is not beneficial, however, because in the next stage of the child’s development, the child must learn how to drink from a cup without using a sucking action.

[0005] Therefore, a need exists for a drinking cup that can train a child to drink properly from a cup without using a sucking action and that will help to prevent spills while allowing the child to drink freely from the cup.

SUMMARY

[0006] Embodiments of the invention generally include training drinking cups with a sipping rim that is configured to prevent spillage when drinking contents from the cup. In one embodiment of the invention, a drinking cup includes a body for holding liquid and a rim having an upper rim edge and a sipping edge. The sipping edge of the rim includes sidewall edges and a lower sipping edge, wherein the sidewall edges extend downwardly from the upper rim edge to the lower sipping edge. In another embodiment, the lower sipping edge comprises a rounded, protruding lip element.

[0007] These and other embodiments of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of embodiments, which is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a training drinking cup according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a side view of a training drinking cup according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0010] FIG. 3 is a front perspective view of a training drinking cup according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0011] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional side view of the training drinking cup of FIG. 3 as viewed along line 4-4 in FIG. 3, according to an embodiment, of the invention.

[0012] FIG. 5 is a top perspective view of the training drinking cup of FIG. 3 as viewed along line 5-5 in FIG. 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] Embodiments of the invention will now be described in further detail with reference to FIGS. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, which schematically depict various views of a training drinking cup (10) with a sipping rim (16, 18) that is configured to prevent spillage when drinking contents from the cup. As generally shown in FIGS. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, the drinking cup (10) comprises a body (12) for holding liquid and a cup rim comprising various edges (14), (16), and (18). In particular, the cup rim comprises an upper rim edge (14) and a sipping rim portion (16, 18) comprising sidewall (or sloping) edges (16), and a lower sipping edge (18). The sidewall edges (16) extend sloping downwardly from the upper rim edge (14) to the lower sipping edge (16). In one embodiment of the invention, the sipping edge (18) comprises a rounded lip edge (18A), which has a greater thickness than the thickness of the walls of the body (12). Moreover, as shown in FIG. 5, for example, the overall shape of the upper rim 14 is oval-shaped, although the overall perimeter of the upper rim can have other shapes (e.g., circular).

[0014] With this exemplary design, an individual (e.g., child) drinking from the cup (10) would put his/her mouth on the sipping edge (18) and tilt the cup body (12) towards his/her face. As the cup is tilted, the sidewall edges (16) of the sipping rim portion start to come in contact with the individual’s face (e.g., lips and cheeks) forming a “seal” against the individual’s facial skin. This “seal” prevents liquid from spilling over the sipping edge (18) at the sides of the individual’s mouth, as would possibly occur with conventional drinking cups with a standard one-level sipping rim.

[0015] The cup rim can have rounded transitions at points where the sidewall edges (16) meet the lower sipping edge (18) and the upper rim edge (14). The rounded transitions serve to (i) provide a better seal of the rim against the facial skin at the transition points between the lower sipping edge (18) and the sidewall edges (16), and to (ii) provide comfort from pinching or poking of the facial skin at the transition points between the sidewall edges (16) and the upper rim edge (14). The rounded lip edge (18A) may be employed to ensure that there is a secure area under which the individual’s bottom lip can rest and allow liquid to flow into the individual’s mouth without seeping out from the bottom lip, and to otherwise provide a tactile comfortable area upon which an individual can place his/her mouth to drink from the cup.

[0016] It is to be understood that the dimensions of the exemplary drinking cup (10) can vary according to the ounce content and the size and/or age of the individual using the drinking cup. For example, the size of the opening formed by the sipping edge (18) and sidewall edges (16) can vary in size, in general, small, medium, or large. The small and medium size opening dimensions can be made to accommodate mouth sizes of young children, while large opening dimensions can be made to accommodate mouth sizes of adults. By way of further example, in one embodiment of the invention, for young children, an overall height of the cup can be approximately five inches, and the distance between the sides of the upper rim 14 of the cup can be three inches across.
Moreover, as shown in FIG. 3, a distance, d, between the upper portions of the sidewall edges (16) can be in a range of about 1 inch to about 2 inches, and a distance, h, between the lower sipping edge (18) and the upper rim edge (14) can be in a range of about 0.5 inches to about 0.75 inches. These dimensions are merely preferred embodiments, and should not be construed as limiting of the scope of the claimed subject matter.

In another embodiment of the invention, as clearly shown in FIGS. 2 and 4, for example, the cup body (12) optionally comprises a back top portion (12A) that extends outwardly more than the middle section of the body (12). This extended body portion (12A) allows a small child to tilt the cup (10) towards his/her face to finish drinking the liquid content in the lower portion of the cup body (12) without hitting the back portion (20) of the upper rim (14) against his/her forehead.

In yet another embodiment of the invention, as specifically shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, for example, one or more level indicators (22) (e.g., rings or other markers) are included inside the cup body (12) at desired increments (e.g., one inch increments) from the bottom of the cup. The one or more level indicators (22) will be visible looking down inside the cup (10). When a young child is introduced to the training cup for the first time, the parent or guardian can fill the drinking liquid to a certain level indicated by one of the level indicators (22) (e.g., lowest first level) in order not to give the child too much to drink. This will start the child off with better control when first starting to drink, and prevent the child from possibly choking by taking in too much liquid at once. Other level indicators (22) can be included at desired increments from the bottom of the cup (10), e.g., two inches high, three inches high, and four inches high and so on. As the child gets more familiar with drinking from the cup, the parent or guardian would add more liquid from one inch to two inches and so on.

It is to be appreciated that a training cup according to an embodiment of the invention enables one to train a child for drinking from a regular cup without having to suck liquid though some port as with a “Sippy” cup. A training cup according to an embodiment of the invention is especially advantageous to train young children in the age group of 1 to 1½ years old, to break away from a conventional “Sippy” cup to a regular cup with minimum amount of spilling, when properly used. A training cup according to an embodiment of the invention obviates the need for using “Sippy” cups for extended periods of time past the toddler age, which can adversely affect the growth of a young child’s teeth where the child can develop a bad habit of biting down on the spout of a Sippy cup, possibly not allowing a child’s teeth to grow in properly.

In other embodiments of the invention, the drinking cup may have other utilitarian or ornamental design features. For instance, the back edge (20) of the upper rim (14) can be shaped as two small bumps or humps (20) (as clearly shown in FIGS. 1 and 3) to accommodate drawings of eyes or ears that blend in with the cup and allow character faces, such as frog eyes, to be incorporated as part of the ornamental aspects of the cup. The inside and outside of the cup can have many bright colors. The outside surface of the drinking cup may be textured at the midsection to assure a better grip for small hands. A drinking cup may include pictures of small animals, birds, bugs sports, rainbows, balloons, stars, superhero figures, etc., wherein the outside of the cup can have various types of character body designs to correspond with the character face inside the cup. In other exemplary embodiments, handles in the form of ears, for example, can be included on each side near the top of the cup body (12).

It is to be understood that training drinking cups as described herein can be formed from any suitable materials such as plastic, paper, Styrofoam, glass, ceramic, etc. Furthermore, drinking cups with rim designs described herein can be used by adults in situations where the adults are lying back as in a hospital bed, reclining, or just walking. The drinking cups can be made for hot or cold liquids.

Although embodiments of the present invention, have been described herein with reference to the accompanying figures, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to those precise embodiments, and that various other changes and modifications may be made therein by one skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the appended claims.

1 claim:
1. A drinking cup, comprising:
   a body for holding liquid; and
   a rim comprising an upper rim edge, and a sipping edge comprising sidewall edges, and a lower sipping edge,
   wherein the sidewall edges extend downwardly from the upper rim edge to the lower sipping edge.
2. The drinking cup of claim 1, wherein the lower sipping edge comprises a rounded, protruding lip element.
3. The drinking cup of claim 1, wherein the body comprises a protruding body portion disposed at an upper portion of the body opposite the sipping edge.

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