

At The Teddy Bears Inn Day Nursery, we recognise that a dummy can be a source of comfort for a child who is settling and/or upset, and that it may often form part of a child's sleep routine.

As babies get older they need to learn to move their mouths in different ways, to smile, to blow bubbles, to make sounds, to chew food and eventually to talk. As babies move their mouths and experiment with babbling sounds they are learning to make the quick mouth movements needed for speech. The more practice they get the better their awareness of their mouths and the better their speech will be. The overuse of a dummy may restrict these movements from taking place and therefore effect a child language development.

The nursery aims to:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents as part of babies individual needs
- Only allow dummies if a child is really upset for comfort (for example if there is problems at home, they are new to the setting) and/or as part of their sleep routine
- Store dummies in individual hygienic dummy boxes labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children
- If a dummy or bottle falls on the floor or is picked up by another child, this is cleaned immediately and sterilised where necessary

When discouraging the dummy staff will:

- Have a designated place which the child will be aware of
- Comfort the child and if age/stage appropriate explain why they are not allowed the dummy in a sensitive and appropriate manner.
- Other factors which affect the child's well-being such as any transition (see transition policy) should be considered before taking away a child's dummy.
- Distract children's attention with other activities and ensure they are settled before leaving them to play.
- Offer other methods of comfort such as toy, teddy or blanket.
- Explain to the child they can have their dummy when they get home or at bed time.

We will also offer support and advice to parents to discourage dummy use during waking hours at home and suggest ways to wean in which the child can be weaned off their dummy (when appropriate).