



Stepping Stones Nursery

Dummy and comforter Policy

At **Stepping Stones Day Nursery** we are committed ensuring the emotional balance of children whilst encouraging a language rich environment where children are able to learn the spoken word and express themselves, within a safe environment.

“Babies and young children spend lots of time making sounds and exploring their own mouths and voices before they begin to use words. Children who suck dummies throughout the day make fewer sounds, gain less experience of using their voices and hear less language from adults around them. If toddlers are allowed to continue to suck a dummy and talk with it in their mouths, there is also a risk that the child will learn distorted patterns of speech because the teat prevents normal movements at the front of their mouth. These patterns may be difficult to change later on.”

Inclusion Development Programme – Supporting Children with speech, language and communication needs: Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Methods

We aim to ensure that children in the setting are able to access to their dummy or comforter when they are distressed or when they need to sleep, but that staff encourage the children to reduce their use of the dummy or comforter whilst at nursery to encourage speech and expression in a safe environment. The dummy will be kept in a safe space, particular to that child.

Procedure

- The child’s key person will work in partnership with the parents to ascertain the personal preferences of the use of the dummy/comforter for their child and make note of the directives as to when this would be required.
- Parents/Carers will complete an all about me document which will inform staff on the preferences of use. These are kept in the child’s room for reference. There are charts around the room for staff to refer to as to what comforters each child may have.
- All dummies and comforters when not in use are kept in the child’s own bag. Each child has their own peg which is named with a photo so all staff are aware of who’s each bag is.
- Once the child arrives and has settled at the start of session, their dummy will gently and carefully be removed and placed in their own bag.
- Should any child be distressed and in need of their dummy it will be offered, along with other comfort and reassurance.
- As soon as the child is happy to continue their activities the dummy/comforter will be retrieved through distraction or encouragement to allow the child maximum learning opportunity.
- Children will be encouraged to speak and express themselves and given praise for all efforts at speech. Comforters can pose a risk to the safety of the child, as they are often blankets, which trail, or teddies which are sucked. All comfort objects will be treated in the same way as a dummy and this policy will be adopted.
- Staff should not remove comforters for negative impact e.g for using negative behaviour. Only should they be removed if the child feels reassured.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>April 2025</i>		<i>April 2027</i>