



Use of Dummies

At Waltham Preschool 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.

We also recognise that overuse of dummies may affect a child's language development as it may restrict the mouth movements needed for speech. 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 practise they get the better their awareness of their mouths and the better their speech will be.

Our preschool will:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents as part of individual plans.
- Only allow dummies for comfort if a child is really upset (or if they are new to the setting or going through a transition) 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.
- Immediately clean any dummy or bottle that falls on the floor or is picked up by another child.
- Signpost parents to speech and language information regarding the impact of speech that dummies can have.

When discouraging the dummy staff will:

- Make each child aware of a designated place where the dummy is stored and is encouraged to have periods without it when they are settled.
- Distract the child with other activities and ensure they are settled before leaving them to play.
- Encourage the child to remove the dummy themselves when talking.
- Offer other methods of comfort such as a toy, teddy or blanket.

We will also offer support and advice to parents to encourage less use of the dummy during waking hours at home, and suggest ways which the child can be weaned off their dummy through books and stories (when appropriate). At no point will staff make assumptions, judgments or presume to overrule the parents' wishes. We will offer advice based on professional training and guidance.

Data will be processed to be in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation.