

## **Favours Day Nursery Ltd Policy and Procedure**

### **Use of Dummies in Nursery**

At Favours 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.

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 practice they get the better their awareness of their mouths and the better their speech will be.

Our nursery will:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents as part of babies' individual care plans. Preschool children are discouraged from bringing a dummy to nursery unless where absolutely necessary
- Only allow dummies for comfort if a child is really upset (for example, if they are new to the setting or going through a transition) and/or as part of their sleep routine
- Store babies' dummies in individual hygienic dummy boxes labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children. Store preschool dummies in sleep boxes or bags, dependent on whether they stay at nursery
- Immediately clean or sterilise any dummy that falls on the floor or is picked up by another child
- Dummies will be disposed of if they become damaged or when they are no longer needed

When discouraging the dummy, staff will:

- Make each child aware of a designated place where the dummy is stored
- Comfort the child and, if appropriate, explain in a sensitive manner why they do not need it
- Distract the child with other activities and ensure they are settled before leaving them to play
- Offer other methods of comfort such as a toy, teddy or blanket
- Explain to the child they can have their dummy at sleep time

We will also offer support and advice to parents to discourage dummy use during waking hours at home and suggest ways which the child can be fully weaned off their dummy (ideally by their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday) through books and stories (when appropriate).

**From the Oral Health Foundation:** If you can, avoid using a dummy and discourage thumb sucking. These can both eventually cause problems with how the teeth grow and develop and this may need treatment with a brace when the child gets older. If your baby needs a dummy there are 'orthodontic' ones that reduce the risk of these problems.

**From the NHS website:** *When should we ditch the dummy?* Six to twelve months is an important time for your baby to stop using a dummy. This is a time when they're learning speech and language and if they have a dummy, it can hinder them from speaking. All babies react differently when dummies are taken away. Some can be quite calm and some can be anxious. But it's important that you're calm, as well. It's important to stop your baby from using a dummy, because there is evidence that suggests that it increases the risk of middle-ear infections. Some can be taken off the dummy straightaway, whereas others need to be gradually weaned off their dummies. You can reduce the amount of time that they use it during the day. Getting your baby off a dummy in the night-time can be difficult, so some parents find it helpful to alter their night-time routine. Some children find comfort in things like toys or a special blanket and that can help calm them. Be very patient and eventually your child will forget about the dummy.

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Written with guidance from the National Day Nurseries Association & NHS