

4.3 Children's Comforters

At Wonderland we recognise that children may have a dummy, special toy or other comforter which can be a source of comfort for the child while settling or if upset and that comforters are often part of a child's sleep routine.

Toys and other comforters

These should be clearly labelled named with the child's name and when not needed should be kept in the child's bag. Toys and other comforters should be checked each time they are given to the child to ensure that they are safe for use and any concerns should be discussed with the parents. The comforters can be given to the children at sleep times or if the child becomes unsettled and in accordance with the child's personal routine.

Use of Dummies

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 will:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents as part of babies' individual care plans.
- Only allow dummies to be used for comfort if a child is upset (for example, if the child is new to the setting or going through a transition) and as part of their sleep routine which is dependent on each individual child's parental preference.
- Store dummies in individual hygienic dummy boxes labeled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children.
- Ensure that if a dummy falls on the floor or is picked up by another child it is cleaned immediately.
- The nursery staff will ensure that a dummy is disposed of is damaged or it is time for it to be disposed of.

When discouraging the use of a dummy staff will:

- Have a designated place for the dummies to be stored 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.
- 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 go home or at sleep time.

We will also offer support and advice to parents to discourage the overuse of a dummy during waking hours at home and suggest ways of which the child can be weaned off their dummy through books and stories (when appropriate).