



<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Dummy and Comforter Policy</b>
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## **Dummy and Comforter Policy**

At Hagbourne Pre-School we recognise the importance of Dummies and comforters in your child's life and that they might bring in a favourite toy, blanket or familiar object from home, into the setting if needed, to ease the settling in process.

We also recognise that many children will use a dummy as a source of comfort when they are upset or are feeling unsettled or tired. However we know that the overuse of dummies may affect a child's development for many reasons.

As children develop they need to use their mouth in different ways; to smile, to blow, bubbles, to make sounds, to chew foods and then to talk. As children move their mouths and experiment with making different shapes with their mouths and sounds with their mouths (babbling) they learn to make the quick mouth movements needed for speech development. The more practice they get, the better their speech will be. Children also begin to understand how communication works as they quickly learn that sounds help them to communicate with the world around them.

Although dummies can be used as a source of comfort for lots of young children, some research has shown that children who suck dummies through the day make fewer speech sounds, gain less experience of using their voices and hear less language from the adults around them. This is believed to be because children can "zone out" during the time they are sucking the dummy or seeking comfort from a familiar object like a blanket.

If toddlers are allowed to continue to seek 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 moments at the front of their mouths. These patterns may be difficult to change later on.

Comforters can also restrict the ability for the child to take part in activities and inhibit opportunities for play and interaction with others within the setting; the child may not be able to

use both hands, may not seek opportunities to play alongside other children and if the comforter becomes dirty from play or lost within the setting, this can be very upsetting for the child.

We therefore do not encourage the use of dummies and comforters within the setting, but are aware of the comfort that it may bring the child to soothe when they get upset. We would strongly recommend that children who use a dummy or bottle refrain from bringing it into the setting and children who have a comforter are encouraged to leave this at home, with their parent/carer after drop off or with a member of staff. However, should removal of the dummy or comforter cause considerable discomfort or upset and consequently the child is unable to settle, then special compensation will be given. Where necessary, each child will be given appropriate strategy agreed between Preschool and home to encourage the phasing out of the dummy/tebottle or comforter over a period of time.

When discouraging a dummy or comforter staff will:

- Make each child aware of a designated place where the dummy/ comforter is stored safely. Staff will ensure that the dummy/comforter is named and where possible dummies should be stored in hygienic dummy boxes to avoid cross contamination.
- Comfort the child and if age/stage appropriate, explain in a sensitive and appropriate manner why the dummy/ comforter is not needed. Explain when it will be returned to the child.
- Distract the child with other activities that they are known to enjoy and seek comfort from.
- Work with parents/carers to help support the child with settling into Preschool and review the process regularly.
- Offer the child lots of positive reinforcement when they settle without the dummy/ comforter.

Review/ Updated:	Signed:
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