

Comforts/Dummy Policy

At Tina's Tots 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. 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.

Tina's Tots aims to:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents as part of babies individual care plans.
- Only allow dummies if a child is particularly in need of comfort (for example if there are problems at home or they are new to the setting) and/or as part of their sleep routine.
- Store dummies in individual hygienic dummy boxes provided by parents and labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children.
- Allow children to select their own dummy from their dummy box to place in their mouth avoiding the practitioner from touching the dummy.
- The practitioner will encourage the child to place the dummy back in their own box after use but if the child is unwilling to do this the practitioner may remove the dummy by the handle or the outer ring avoiding the teat.
- Parents will be expected to provide the child's dummy in a dummy box and clean the dummy at home before sending to nursery.
- Parents will be expected to bring their child into nursery with their dummy in their allocated box in the bag. Practitioners will then retrieve this when needed for sleep time.
- Parents will be encouraged to wait until outside the building before giving their child their dummy.
- If a dummy or bottle falls onto the floor or is picked up by another child, staff will aim to clean it immediately using a small amount of soap and rinsed with hot water
- Parents should aim to mirror limited dummy use at home and wherever possible bring their child into nursery settled and without the dummy in their mouth.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families issued a document called, 'Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs: Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage', from which the following quotation can be found: 'Dummies and bottles can contribute to delayed communication development'. Therefore, at Tina's Tots we will support children and parents with this.

When discouraging the dummy, staff will:

- Children's dummies will be stored in their individual box provided and within their bags. Children will be aware of this to help them feel more secure when they do not have it in their mouth.
- 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 get home or at bedtime.

[Looking after your baby's teeth - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

We will also aim to offer support and advice to parents to discourage dummy use during waking hours at home and suggest ways to wean in which the child can be weaned off their dummy (when appropriate).