



Brenchley Preschool

Dummy Policy

Babies and young children spend most of their time making sounds and exploring their own mouths and voices before they begin to use words. In doing so they are not only practicing and developing the skills needed for speech, but they are also encouraging other people in the world to notice them and communicate with them. Children who suck dummies through the day make fewer sounds, gain less experience of using their voices, and hear less language from adults around them.

Dummies are only recommended by the National Literacy Trust for soothing babies at bedtime or when a child is tired or cross. Regular use of a dummy could create problems with your child's speech.

- Your child may not use the full range of tongue movements that are necessary for making all the speech sound
- Your child has fewer opportunities to babble and use sounds to communicate with you this is obviously an important step in learning to talk and could lead to poor personal and social skills due to lack of interaction
- If toddlers are allowed to continue to suck 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 movements at the front of their mouth. These patterns may be difficult to change later on.

As a response to this advice the Staff at Brenchley Pre-School will encourage children to remove their dummy as soon as they are settled each session. This will be supported by the child's keyperson and will be conducted sensitively taking in their emotional needs. The dummy will be placed out of reach of all children for hygiene purposes.

In the belief that proactive steps can be taken to ensure children develop the best speech and language possible in child care settings, and that parents and staff can work together,

Brenchley Pre-school staff will also work with parents in the same way to help them to phase out dummies and bottles sensitively, again taking into account children's emotional needs by signposting them towards supportive literature and advice and guidance at our local children centre.

This policy links to our Settling In Policy

Useful documents/websites

Advice on reducing dummy use to support language development:
www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk

www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/ask8/ask8_early_years_ecat_home.cfm

Links between dummy use and reducing the risk of sudden infant death/cot death:
www.fsid.org.uk

This Policy was reviewed at a Management Meeting held on 1st September 2025



Mrs Victoria Relle – Chairman of Brenchley Preschool