

## Thrive's Guide to..... Discarding Dummies

Thrive Childcare and Education recognise that a dummy can be an important source of comfort for a child and is often an essential tool for children to self-soothe when distressed, supporting them with their developing skill of self-regulation. However, we also understand that the overuse of dummies may affect a child's language development as overuse of the dummy can restrict the mouth movements needed for early speech development. There are suggested benefits to young children using dummies at sleep times and when they need comforting. However, research recommends discouraging 'routine' dummy use around 8 months, suggesting instead that they are used only for sleep times and as a source of comfort when a child is distressed.

Our policy explains our approach to dummy use at nursery. We have created this guide to support families who have identified that it is an appropriate time for the child to stop using a dummy at nursery and home.

### There are good reasons to discourage too much dummy use

Discouraging dummy use in older children may have been mentioned by adults at nursery or during visits with outside professionals such as your Health Visitor, this is because dummies can:

- Make it difficult for children to babble or practice sounds
- Stop the full range of tongue movements that are needed for some speech sounds- this can have long term effects
- Cause a gap between the top and bottom teeth when used a lot
- Present issues with hygiene leading to infections.



### Strategies to consider:

- Encourage children to remove the dummy when playing or talking
- Explain to your child (where appropriate) that you will be stopping using the dummy soon giving them time to process it
- Share stories which support your choice to stop dummy use (see list below)
- Speak with the adults at nursery so that they can ensure the child is not given a dummy at nursery when this is being discouraged at home
- Use nursery as a way of 'gifting' the dummies to them in return for a certificate of thanks or as part of a dummy campaign (leave the dummy for Stick Man or East Bunny to take away)
- Let the child choose other comforters that they can take to nursery for when they need them such as a teddy or blanket that will go home with the child each day.

### Supporting documents and reading (click on the link):

[www.lets-talk.scot.nhs.uk/tips-and-info/top-tips/babies-and-dummies/syndrome/#:~:text=If%20you%20do%20use%20a,6%20and%2012%20months%20old.](http://www.lets-talk.scot.nhs.uk/tips-and-info/top-tips/babies-and-dummies/syndrome/#:~:text=If%20you%20do%20use%20a,6%20and%2012%20months%20old.)

[www.themummybubble.co.uk/when-to-stop-using-dummy/](http://www.themummybubble.co.uk/when-to-stop-using-dummy/)

[www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/weaning-baby-off-dummy/z62b3j6?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=dummy](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/weaning-baby-off-dummy/z62b3j6?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=dummy)

### Suggested books you may like to share with your child:

- I want my Dummy!
- Florrie the Dummy Fairy
- Ben gives up his Dummy
- The Last Noo-Noo