



Little Learners
NURSERY GROUP

Use of Dummies and Comforters in the Nursery

Reviewed: July 2024

To be reviewed: July 2025

Dummies

At Little Learners Nursery Group 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 affect a child's language development.

The nursery aims to:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents as part of children's 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 labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children's dummies
- If a dummy or bottle falls on the floor or is picked up by another child, this is cleaned immediately and sterilised where necessary

When discouraging the use of a dummy staff will:

- Have a designated place for the dummies to be stored, which the child will be made aware of to help them feel more secure

- 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 favourite toys, teddy or blanket.
- Explain to the child they can have their dummy when they get home or at bed time

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

Comforters

At the Nurseries of Little Learner's Nursery Group, we also recognise that some children may need a comforter from home such as a soft toy or blanket when they are settling and/or upset, and that it may often form part of a child's sleep routine. We allow comforters in the baby and toddler units, however we discourage such items once the children have reached preschool age (3-4 years).

The nursery aims to:

- Ensure only that individual child has access to the comforter
- Only allow comforters if a child is upset (for example if there are problems at home or they are new to the setting) and/or as part of their sleep routine
- Store comforters in a cupboard/individual tray during the main parts of the day
- A comforter will be checked to ensure it is age and stage appropriate.

This is to ensure the safety of other children in the setting, for example, if a soft toy from home has small loose buttons it may not be allowed in case another child swallows the parts.