

Dummies and talking

Some parents choose to give their child a dummy, some choose not to. However, if you give your child a dummy, it is very easy for this to become a habit, even by the time the child has reached 12 months old.

Advantages

- A dummy can be used to comfort a baby that is hard to settle (note that, if the baby is breastfed, this should only be done when breastfeeding is established).

Disadvantages

- Dummy sucking may cause dental problems, mouth infections and ear infections.
- Dummies make it difficult for your child to talk.

Remember:

- Do not let the dummy stay in your child's mouth for long periods of time.
- Do not secure the dummy in your child's mouth – this could lead to choking.
- Never clip the dummy onto your child's clothes.
- Do not dip the dummy in sweet, sugary foods or drinks – this may lead to tooth decay.
- Never let your child talk with a dummy in his/her mouth.
- Overuse of a dummy can have an effect on your child's speech sound production and may lead to speech problems.
- Use a dummy only for sleep times.

Useful tips for stopping dummy use:

- Prepare the child for stopping the dummy – talk about getting rid of it.
- Choose a good time to give up the dummy, eg over a weekend and when you and your partner are not at work. Be prepared for sleepless nights.
- Never give the dummy back to the child once you have said that it has gone.
- Your child could give their dummy away in return for a small present.

If you have any concerns, please contact your health visitor or a speech and language therapist.