

## Dummy Policy

At ICP Nurseries 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.

We also recognise that overuse of dummies may affect a child's language development as it may restrict the muscles developing that are needed for speech. 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 will be and the better their speech will develop.

Our nursery will:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents during the settling in sessions
- Only allow dummies for comfort if a child is really upset (for example, if they are new to the setting or going through a transition) and/or as part of their sleep routine
- Always communicate to the child when removing their dummy and NOT just remove it.
- Store dummies in individual hygienic dummy boxes labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children
- Immediately clean or steam sterilise any dummy that falls on the floor or is picked up by another child
- Dummies will be disposed of if they become damaged and we will ask parents to provide the nursery with a new dummy

When discouraging the dummy staff will:

- Make each child aware of a designated place where the dummy is stored
- Comfort the child and, if age/stage appropriate, explain in a sensitive and appropriate manner why they do not need their dummy
- Distract the child with other activities and ensure they are settled before leaving them to play
- Offer other methods of comfort such as a toy, teddy or blanket
- Explain to the child they can have their dummy when they go home or at sleep time

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