

The facts about

Dummies

Your child may have used a dummy when they were a baby. The dummy may have helped your baby to drop off to sleep, or to just calm them when they were grizzly.



If your baby is nearly one year old, or you have an older child who still uses a dummy, it is important to think about the use of their dummy.

There are some disadvantages linked to using dummies that can result in problems for your child.

Did you know...

Your child could develop problems with their tongue and teeth. Muscles at the front of the mouth could become over developed compared to those at the back of the mouth.

Your child could find it difficult to learn to talk. Babies and children learn how to talk by copying what you say, but they cannot easily do this with a dummy in their mouth. Difficulties in talking can affect your child's ability to learn to read and write at school.

Your child may develop difficulties with their speech sounds. If your baby or child talks with a dummy in their mouth they get used to making sounds at the back of their mouth rather than at the front. This can make their speech difficult to understand.

Your child may dribble more. Using a dummy regularly can result in lack of sensation around the lips. This can mean that children are messier (than usual for toddlers) at meal times or they may dribble a lot.

Sucking a dummy for a long time could result in a persistent tongue thrust. Sucking a dummy encourages the tongue to come forward in the mouth.

Tips for dumping the dummy

If your baby or child is upset, instead of using a dummy, use the 'look, listen, think' rule

- LOOK** at your baby or child – can you see something making them sad that you can fix?
- LISTEN** to their cries or what they are saying – they might be telling you what's wrong.
- THINK** about what else could help – try distracting them with a song, a cuddle, a tickle, a game, a toy, etc.



The younger your child is, the easier it is to 'dump the dummy.'



Babies and toddlers

If your baby is using a dummy during the day start by cutting back to sleep times only.

Decide on a date to take it away and go 'cold turkey'. Your baby or child may be a bit grizzly at first, as they are used to having their dummy, but this stage will not last long.

Two years and above

Leave dummies for the dummy fairy, Easter bunny or Santa in return for a present.

Keep a chart with stars or stickers for each day and night that they manage without their dummy. A present for making it through a week is a good incentive.

Dig a hole in the garden and bury the dummy. You could plant something to grow there.

Don't give in

– it gives your child mixed messages and makes it harder for them and you the next time you try.

Need more info?

If you need help to 'dump the dummy', then speak to your:

- Local children's centre
 - either pop in or give them a call 01803 210200
- Your health visitor
- Your child's early years setting

This information is available in other formats.
Telephone 01803 207895 for information.