

We all know that dummies can be very comforting and can often help children when they're tired or going to sleep at night. Speech and Language Therapists do however recommend that children over 12 months do not have a dummy or a bottle because it can affect the way they speak. If your child uses a dummy a lot especially during the day when they're playing and learning to talk, follow this simple advice.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH DUMMIES & BOTTLES?

For some children, sucking a dummy or using a bottle a lot can restrict tongue movements and /or cause a gap to form in the front teeth – these things make saying sounds very difficult.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD USES THEM

Aim to get rid of the dummy/bottle at around 12 months.

Use a flat teat rather than a cherry teat as this has less effect on children's teeth.

Try fading out the dummy /bottle by cuddling or reading to your child before bedtime instead of giving it to them automatically - distract them so that they don't think about it too much!



WHERE TO START

Remove the dummy/bottle when your child is trying to talk - or during the day when they are playing or are around other people and are likely to be trying to say something.



Once you have decided to give up the dummy / bottle don't be tempted to give it back - and make sure there are none left lying around!



IDEAS THAT SOME PARENTS HAVE TRIED

- Leave the dummy/bottle to Santa to take as a swap for presents.
- Swap the dummy for a present or cuddly toy - letting the child choose it in the toy shop. Give the dummy to the lady at the counter when you pay.
- Swap the bottle for a really nice cup which they have chosen (with their favourite character on e.g. Thomas etc).
- Pretend to give all your child's dummies to a friend's baby – saying how dummies and bottles are for babies and that your child is grown up now.
- Get your child to throw the dummy/ bottle in the bin and go over the top with praise for them doing it!



**Remember
There's a time and place for a dummy!**

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S TALKING OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL YOUR LOCAL SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES.

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partnership to produce this
information

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