



Dummies - The Facts

For some children dummies are a big source of comfort. Therefore our advice is around how best to use dummies.

If I cry it's my way of telling you something, try to find out what it is, I might not need my dummy

Before you put the dummy in your babies mouth try and find out if there is any other problem first. They may just be bored and need a cuddle! Or try giving them an interesting toy or book.

Without my dummy I can practice moving my tongue around for talking and my teeth will have room to grow

It is important that babies and children have time to practice moving the tongue around their mouth e.g. making sounds, babbling, saying words without an obstruction in their mouth.

A dummy can make it difficult for your child to practice sounds needed for speech (e.g. babbling, blowing, blowing raspberries etc). It can push the tongue backwards making it difficult for the tongue tip to move around the front of the mouth. (This is needed for sounds which are made at the front of the mouth such as "t,d,l,s,p,b").

Try and have clear routines about using the dummy e.g. for sleep times only (the dummy can be left in the cot/bed/in a tub in the bedroom). Your child will learn that the dummy is only for sleep time.

When we are ill we need extra love and care – it's the same for our children! Therefore when your child is feeling ill they may need their dummy as a comfort more. This is fine and once they are feeling better you can introduce the routines again.

When I have my dummy out, I will be able to chat with you more

When out and about try and wait until your baby/child gets tired/upset and then put the dummy in rather than putting the dummy in straight away. They may want to gurgle, babble, talk to you first!

Remember that before they can use words your child will need to go through a state of playing with sounds, such as blowing raspberries, making repetitive sounds like "bababa" or "dadada" or shrieks and shouts! These sounds are all important in practicing and developing the sounds they will need for speech sounds. If children have their dummies out for longer they will have more opportunities to exercise their mouth and tongue ready for speech sounds to develop.

When babies/children are playing they go through a stage of development when they 'mouth' toys. This is an important stage of development and if the child has a dummy in their mouth they may miss this stage.

Having a dummy in the mouth for long periods of time can affect how teeth grow. Teeth need room to grown down and second teeth need room to grow. If there is an obstruction in the mouth for long periods then teeth may grow around the obstruction.