



# Use of Dummies Policy

At Allsorts Childcare, we understand that a dummy can provide comfort to a child who is settling down or feeling upset, and it often plays a role in their sleep routine.

However, we are also aware that excessive use of dummies may impact a child's language development, as it can limit the mouth movements necessary for speech. As babies grow, it is important for them to learn to move their mouths in various ways—such as smiling, blowing bubbles, making sounds, chewing food, and eventually talking. When babies practice moving their mouths and experimenting with babbling sounds, they are developing the rapid mouth movements required for effective speech. The more they practice, the better their awareness of their mouths will be, which can lead to improved speech.

## **Allsorts staff will:**

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents as part of babies' individual care plans
- 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
- Store dummies in individual hygienic dummy boxes labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children
- Immediately clean or sterilise any dummy or bottle that falls on the floor or is picked up by another child.
- Dummies will be disposed of if they become damaged and/or when they are required to be disposed of.

## **When discouraging the dummy, staff will:**

- Make each child aware of a designated place where the dummy is stored
- Comfort the child and, if appropriate, explain in a sensitive 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).

**Cleaning and maintaining all resources and equipment**

We ensure all resources and equipment are clean and well-maintained. Any unsafe, worn-out, dirty, or damaged items are either repaired or replaced as needed. We keep an inventory of all resources and equipment.

We evaluate the effectiveness of these resources, taking into account the opinions and interests of the children. Adults model appropriate use and care for equipment and resources through discussion and demonstration.