

Giving Up The Dummy

Why Do Some Families Start Using Dummies?

We know that some people find that using dummies with new babies is helpful. Some families find that using a dummy **helps** to:



What Are My Alternatives?

If you are using a dummy with your baby, then consider the following **advice**:

1

Choose an **orthodontic dummy** as it is kinder on their mouth and teeth.

2

Don't dip their dummy in anything **sweet**. This can cause gum and tooth decay.

3

Don't force them to use a dummy. If they repeatedly spit it out, then they probably don't like it!

Why Should A Child Give Up The Dummy?


Research tells us that children do not need a dummy after the age of 12 months and **that the sooner a child gives up the dummy, the better**. In fact, continued use of dummies can lead to several significant problems:

FEEDING DIFFICULTIES



Using a dummy may **delay** the development of chewing skills. This can lead to children being messier eaters.

DRIBBLING



A dummy can cause children to **dribble** more by making it difficult for your child to close their mouth and swallow properly. This can also lead to a **sore** mouth and/or chin.

DENTAL PROBLEMS



Dummy use can affect the **position of children's teeth** as they grow and can affect a child's speech sounds, making some sounds difficult to say.



SPEECH SOUNDS


The dummy may prevent your child from making the correct speech sounds because **it is in the way**. As a result, your child cannot **'play' with sounds**, which is very important for development.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

Dummy use increases the risk of your child suffering from recurrent **ear infections**.



COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE



If your child is using a dummy, they are **less likely** be able to **smile**, **babble** and **chat** with you and you will have fewer chances to do the same. Dummy use can mean that your child does not have the opportunity to use the **new words** that they are hearing.

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Asking For Help

Giving up the dummy can seem like a difficult task for children and their families. You are not alone when it comes to supporting your baby or toddler to give up their dummy.

Your child's Health Visitor, GP, Childminder, Nursery or preschool are all on hand to offer advice and support. If your child is in an educational setting, then together you can decide on a consistent approach that works for your child

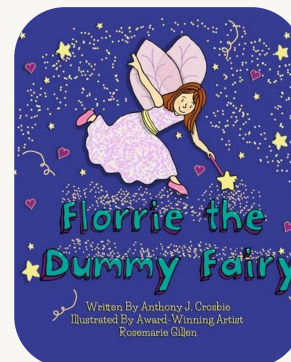
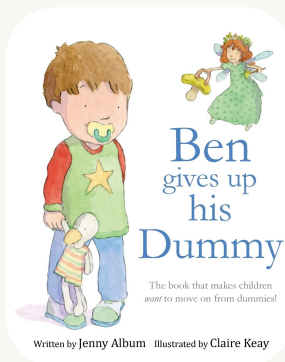
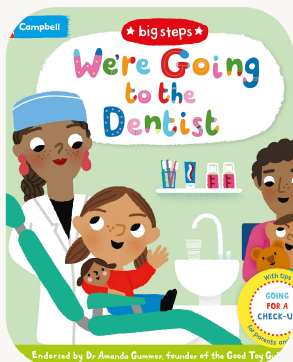
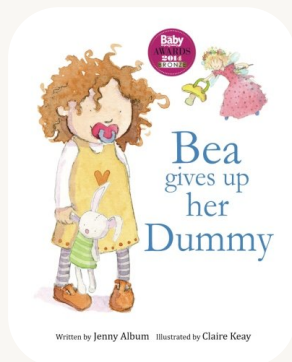


What Do Speech And Language Therapists Say?



"As professionals who work with speech and language, we would actively discourage dummies for babies once they start to babble. They affect speech, language, feeding and hearing. Try talking with a huge marshmallow in your mouth! That's what it's like for a child with a dummy!"

Book Recommendations To Giving Up The Dummy



If you have concerns around your child's speech and language or dummy use, consider speaking to your health visitor.

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How Do I Help My Child To Give Up The Dummy?

TIPS FOR REDUCING DUMMY USE

1

When your child is upset, try to find out why. Consider **distracting** them with something instead of giving them a dummy.

2

Use the dummy as **little as possible**, perhaps only at sleep time. Remember to **remove** the dummy when your child is asleep.

3

Try **leaving** the dummy at home when you go out or **swapping** it for a 'special toy'.

4

Always **remove** your child's dummy when they are **babbling, talking** and **playing**.

TIPS FOR REMOVING THE DUMMY



Many families find a 'clean break' is the best solution and that their child is not upset for longer than a couple of days without their dummy. If you are opting for this strategy, then consider the following

1

Remove the dummy when your child is **happiest** and when you have **support** from family and friends, e.g. at the weekend

2

Try '**sending the dummy away**' to the magical dummy fairies or new babies!

3

Avoid talking about the dummy too much. Consider **distraction techniques** until the dummy becomes a thing of the past!

If your child has sensory needs or is orally fixated, then they may benefit from having a safe toy to 'chew on'. Consider speaking to your Health Visitor about alternatives to dummies.