

Here is our dummy advice!

During a baby's early months a dummy can be really helpful to comfort and settle babies. However, when children use dummies too much or for too long it can affect their talking.

What does this mean?

- Dummies can stop the full range of tongue movements that are needed for some speech sounds: this can have long term effects.
- If your child has a dummy they have fewer opportunities to babble and practise sounds and they may talk less or their speech sounds may be unclear
- Dentists have found that sucking a dummy a lot can affect teeth and some children develop a gap between their top and bottom teeth. This can affect how clear their speech is too.



What can we do to help to reduce the use of a dummy?

- Gradually reduce the use of a dummy: it is much easier to break the habit before the age of 12 months than after 12 months
- If you need to use a dummy, use it for a few minutes to settle your child
- Don't automatically give your older child a dummy - wait until they ask or show that they want it
- Try to keep dummies for sleep times only
- Encourage them to take the dummy out of their mouth when they are talking
- Use a dummy chart and give them a sticker for every night or day they manage without it



Go to www.hacw.nhs.uk/dummyelves for resources and advice