



## **Dummy Policy:**

Babies and young children spend a great deal of time experimenting with their voices: creating sounds, babbling, squealing, cooing, making words and exploring their own mouths long before they begin to use 'words.' This is how babies practice and develop the skills required for speech and language. They are also learning about communication: beginning to realise that using their voices can attract attention and bring them closer to the people around them through various interactions.

Studies have shown that children who suck dummies throughout the day make fewer sounds, gain less experience using their voices, and hear less language from adults around them.

If toddlers continue to suck a dummy whilst developing the skill of talking, there is also a risk that the child will learn distorted patterns of speech, as a result of the teat preventing normal movements at the front of their mouth. These patterns may be difficult to change as the child gets older.

Ducklings Childcare Ltd believes that proactive steps can be taken to ensure children develop the best speech and language possible. We therefore intend that our practitioners and parents will work together in order to give the best start to the babies and children in their care.

We recognise that a dummy can be a source of comfort when a child is upset, and that they often form part of child's sleep routine. Consequently, the key person will encourage the babies and young children in their care to only use their dummy at these times. Taking into account the children's emotional needs, the key person can sensitively support the process of phasing out a dummy at any time, at the request of the parents. Staff must ensure that all children have "no dummy talking time" everyday giving the child chance to communicate without the dummy. Staff ensure that leaflets and information are available for all parents regarding dummy use. Staff encourage children to remove their dummy when talking to staff or other children to give the child the opportunity to talk without the hindrance of a dummy.