

# Inn Farm Private Day Nursery



## Ditching the Dummy!

Using a dummy long term can have a significant effect on children's language development as there are fewer opportunities to communicate with others. It is much more difficult for a child to respond clearly or initiate conversations if they have a dummy in their mouth! Sucking on a dummy restricts the movement of the mouth and tongue that is necessary to produce speech sounds correctly. It can also affect the position of teeth. Therefore it is a good idea to reduce and restrict the use of dummies as early as possible.

When it comes to ditching their dummy permanently, it is a good idea to get your child involved in the process and to give them the 'responsibility' of giving up their dummies. Christmas is an ideal time for your child to lose their dummy as there are so many things going on that will provide a distraction for your child. Preparation is key and you can start laying the ground work for this now!

Start by telling your child that it is soon going to be Christmas and that Father Christmas has sent you an email/text (the modern age we live in) explaining that he is very busy and he needs little boys and girls to help him. Explain that Father Christmas needs dummies for all the new babies who are going to be born on Christmas Day and he knows that they would like to help. Tell your child that in return for their dummy, Father Christmas is going to leave them a special present and then ask your child what they think the present might be, hopefully helping to encourage them to agree to the swap.

If your child is reliant on the dummy during the day you will need to start by limiting its use. Choose a time when you are not rushing about and tell your child that as the dummy will soon be going to the new babies at Christmas it needs to stay in their bedroom. They will probably be a bit miserable for the first day that they are denied it, but getting them out of the house for lots of physical activities will help. At night give them lots of praise for not using their dummy during the day and explain that they can have it now as it is bedtime. Persevere with this, continually reinforcing how well they are doing and that Father Christmas is busy getting all the presents ready for the little girls and boys who are giving him their dummies. It is always a good idea to take it out of your child's mouth when asleep.

On Christmas Eve keep your child as busy as possible. Sending your child to bed tired is very important. During the day allow your child to choose some wrapping paper and then help them to wrap their dummy up in the paper and pop it under the tree, reminding them again that Father Christmas needs dummies for all the new babies. When it comes to bedtime, try to move it back by half an hour and then follow your normal routine. If you have managed to wear them out during Christmas Day then they should hopefully fall asleep within seconds of their head hitting the pillow. Hopefully Boxing Day will also be very busy and again they will go to bed exhausted and should fall asleep promptly, without their dummy.

There may be some crying and complaining in the following days, but many parents are surprised at how easily their child relinquishes their dummy and ask themselves why they didn't try it sooner! Bedtimes might be a bit trickier if your child relied on their dummy to settle themselves. However, if they manage one night, then they can manage without- you just need to persevere! Try to distract them with lots of cuddles and stories. Once the dummy has gone, don't go back. Throw the dummy away rather than stashing it in a hiding place 'just in case'. That way, you can't give it back to them even if you're tempted to!

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