**Dummy Policy**

‘Little Oak Pre-school will promote good health, including oral health, of children attending the setting.’

**Purpose of the policy**

The purpose of the policy is to ensure parents/carers are clear when and how dummies will be used at Little Oak Pre-school. Little Oak Pre-school understands that some younger children settle with a dummy and it is our aim and ambition to try and refrain from using dummies as a comfort method unless necessary. The policy also gives guidance on the impact using a dummy can have on a child’s development.

**We aim to:**

* Raise awareness for parents/carers about the positive and negative impact dummies can have on a child’s development.
* Help to support parent’s wishes on dummy use for children attending Little Oak Pre-school.

**Guidance**

Little Oak Pre-school will work closely with parents/carers in their choices for their child and recognise that some young children may have a dummy at home. We are mindful therefore, that some use of dummies needs to take place sensitively and appropriately to correctly meet the needs of the child and promote the benefits but at the same time be mindful and prevent problems which may arise from overuse.

**Further research suggests the negative impact of dummies includes:**

* They can affect the positioning of the teeth causing the top and bottom teeth not to meet properly.
* They can cause long term dribbling as the child breathes through their mouth rather than their nose.
* They can prevent use of full range of tongue movements that are necessary for making all the speech sounds.
* Overuse can delay talking as there are fewer opportunities for the child to babble and communicate.

**What should you do:**

* Discuss your wishes regarding dummy use with Little Oak Pre-school.
* Limit the use of a dummy at home to times when it is needed to comfort you child i.e., don’t allow children to walk round with a dummy most of the day.
* When dropping off and collecting your child do not give your child a dummy unless they are upset.

**What we will do:**

* We will support parents/carers to follow an appropriate dummy routine.
* We will allow children to have their dummies at times when they are distressed or need comfort.
* Discuss with parents/carers when a child’s dependence on a dummy is affecting their development.
* Hygienic storage should be provided for dummies and ensure that a child receives their own dummy at appropriate times.
* Remove the dummy when children are awake or their distress has passed.
* Support parents/carers to reduce/discontinue the use of a dummy.

*All staff will have signed and dated the office copy once they have read and fully understood the policy in practice.*

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Rosalind Hambidge (Director) Date: 2/3/2023

Signed on behalf of Little Oak Pre-school (Witney) Ltd

Policy review due: November 2023