

# Talk About... dummies



Becoming a confident and chatty communicator is one of the most important skills your child will ever learn, but it doesn't happen by accident. Our top tips give you ideas about how to support your child as they learn about language.

Find out more at:

[www.talkaboutnorfolk.co.uk](http://www.talkaboutnorfolk.co.uk)

If you would like to receive these tips by email, please drop us a line at [talkabout@nchc.nhs.uk](mailto:talkabout@nchc.nhs.uk)

Dummies can be useful, helping to soothe babies to sleep and giving them security. However, beyond 12 months, toddlers and children don't need a dummy during the day.

For children over one year use of a dummy can lead to:

**Speech problems:** because the dummy is in the way, speech sounds may be made in the wrong place in your child's mouth.

**Communication problems:** if your baby is using a dummy they will be less likely to smile, babble or chat with you and you will have fewer chances to smile, babble and talk to them. It takes two to talk!

**Dental problems:** dummy use can affect the position of teeth as they grow.

**Health problems:** children who use dummies are more likely to get ear infections.

**Dribbling:** a dummy can cause children to dribble more.

## How to make the most of dummies:

It is easiest to get rid of the dummy early – at 12 months if possible.

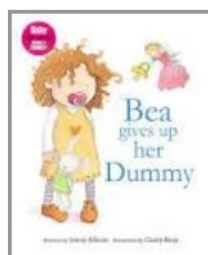
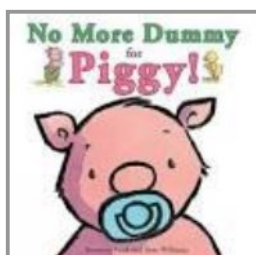
Use a dummy as little as possible, keeping it just for sleep times works best.

Always remove your child's dummy when they are making noises (babbling), talking or playing.

When your child is upset, try and find out why and distract him with something instead of giving the dummy.

The sooner you break the habit the easier it will be! Do this by choosing a time when your child is well and happy but be prepared for him to be upset for a few days. Try leaving the dummy at home when you go out or swapping the dummy for a special toy. You could even leave the dummy for the 'dummy fairy'. Remember, it's important you get rid of all of them at once, or your child is bound to find them!

Why not try one of these stories to help you and your child ditch the dummy?



**Competition time!** For a chance to win a book for you and your child, as well as 5 books for their nursery, visit our website and fill in the online entry form at [www.talkaboutnorfolk.co.uk](http://www.talkaboutnorfolk.co.uk) under the 'for parents' section.