

## Other ideas that parents have tried

- Give lots of positive praise for your child when they do not use their dummy
- Give the dummy to Santa/Tooth fairy
- Get your child to throw the dummy in the bin
- Swap the dummy for a gift/cuddly toy/new toothbrush
- Keep a chart with stars or stickers for each day and night that they manage without the dummy.



### Remember

- Never dip your baby's dummy and bottle into anything sweet, this can cause tooth decay.

Don't give in, it gives your child mixed messages and makes it harder for them and for you the next time that you try.

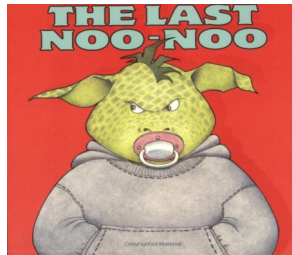
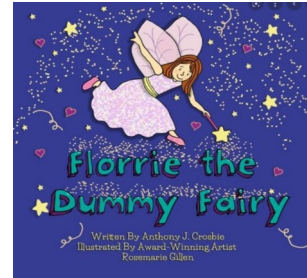
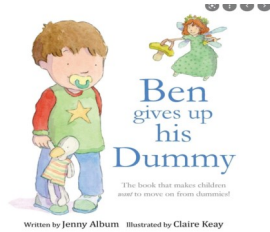
If you need any further support with weaning your baby off bottles or dummies then you can seek advice from your local health visiting team.

**The NHS recommend stopping use of a dummy by the time your child is 12 months old. To find out more visit**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/play-and-learning/help-your-baby-learn-to-talk/>

## Need more advice?

If you need more help, or if you have concerns about your child's talking please talk to your child's health visitor or your child's early years setting



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## Strong Close Nursery School

## Supporting Your Child To Wean Off Bottles and Dummies



Many parents use a dummy or a bottle to help soothe their child. This can be an invaluable support to parents and babies in the early months. However, we know that prolonged use of bottles and dummies can lead to a variety of problems including tooth decay, nutritional problems and speech delay.

If your child is nearly one year old, or you have an older child who still uses a dummy or bottle it is important to think about the long term use and the potential risks to your child's development.

This leaflet is designed to give you a few ideas on how to manage your child's use of a dummy and bottle.

## Did you know?

**Bottle feeding and tooth decay**—Giving babies and toddlers sweetened liquids or drinks with natural sugars (like milk, formula, and fruit juice) in a bottle can cause tooth decay. Sugary drinks at naptime or night-time are particularly harmful as the natural saliva in the mouth that protects the teeth from acid is reduced. Baby teeth are necessary for chewing, speaking and smiling. If tooth decay is left untreated, pain and infection can result. Severely decayed teeth may need to be removed. If teeth are infected or lost too early due to baby bottle tooth decay, your child may develop poor eating habits, speech problems, crooked teeth, and damaged adult teeth.

### Overuse of a dummy can have an impact on:

- The development of babbling, an important early stage in learning to talk. Babies and children learn how to talk by copying what you say, but they cannot easily do this with a dummy in their mouth.
- Development of the full range of speech sounds. If your baby or child talks with a dummy in their mouth they get used to making sounds at the back of their mouth rather than at the front. This can make their speech difficult to understand.
- Increased dribbling— this can give your child a sore chin.
- Tooth decay and cause changes to their mouth such as crooked or crowded teeth, jaw misalignment, bite problems such as buck teeth, changes in the roof of the mouth and the position of the teeth which could lead to braces in the future.

That's why the [NHS recommend](#) discontinuing dummy use by age one.

### When is the best time to get rid of the dummy/bottle?

Getting rid of a dummy/bottle may not be easy. However it can be more difficult to wean children off as they get older. Children over the age of 1 do not need to use a dummy or a bottle.

### Weaning off bottles -

From the age of 1 year, babies can switch from formula milk to cow's milk. This is an opportunity to begin to offer milk in a cup



rather than a bottle. If you're still breastfeeding, you can continue feeding your baby breast milk as usual, but offer water from a cup.

Breast-fed babies do not need to be given formula. However, all babies need vitamin supplements.

Many parents worry that when they take the bottle away, their child's milk intake reduces. The recommended amount of milk for a one year old is between 350-500ml per day. If your child is eating cheese, yoghurt or other dairy products in their diet, they can drink less milk. Sugar is the biggest cause of



tooth decay in young children. If you use a bottle or trainer cup, don't put anything in it other than infant formula, breast milk or water. By 12 months of age, most infants have the coordination and ability to hold a cup.

**Switching from a bottle to cup can be challenging, here are some tips to help you:** Start to introduce your baby to a cup from about six months onwards. By the time your baby is one, they should have

Choosing an open cup or a free-flow cup with a lid and without a valve (i.e. not an Any-way-up cup) will help your baby learn to sip rather than suck, this is better for their teeth. Comfort sucking on sweetened drinks is the biggest cause of tooth decay in young children. If you use a bottle or trainer cup, don't put anything in it other than infant formula, breast milk or water.



**Useful tips-** When your child does use the cup, offer plenty of praise and positive reinforcement.

-If you keep getting asked for the bottle, respond in a calm and positive manner, consider your baby's needs for comfort and reassurance, try to distract and offer alternatives, e.g. playtime or a snack.

-When you get rid of the bottles or put them out of sight and ensure that other caregivers use a consistent response to requests for bottles.

**Giving up the dummy-** Not all babies need or want a dummy. Try to use a dummy only



when your baby is tired, upset or trying to get to sleep. Don't give your baby a dummy unless he or she really needs it. Try to reduce dummy use by the time your baby is 6-9 months old.

-Choose the right time for your child to give up their dummy. If your child is using a dummy during the day, start by cutting back to sleep times only.

-If necessary give a substitute comfort object that the child can carry around for security such as a toy or book.