Bottles, Cups & Dummies Policy

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Introduction

With increasing understanding of the impact of bottles, cups and dummies on children's development, it is key that early years settings consider their role in promoting their good use and how a policy would support this in practice. Although it is not statutory for settings to have such a policy, we believe we have a professional responsibility to provide care based on evidence and best practice. The research that is available, along with considerable feedback from speech and language, dentistry and dietetic professionals, highlights that the use of bottles, cups and dummies can have a direct impact on children's oral health, speech and language skills and even general health.

Aim

It is our aim to work with parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care receive the best outcomes. This policy is designed to support parents on the best way to use bottles, cups and dummies with their children (and to that extent goes beyond the scope of care provided in setting). It focuses on the importance of good practice in supporting children to move on to open cups and give up dummies at the right time to ensure that children's speech and language development is not hindered.

Best Practice Recommendations

Bottles

- We recommend that from 12 months, bottle use is reduced with the aim of making a complete withdrawal as soon as possible after this. We therefore anticipate that it will only be on very rare occasions when we have a child in setting using a bottle.
- If a child joins Pre-school who is still using a bottle, we will discuss with parents/carers at the earliest possible opportunity the benefits of that child moving on to using an open cup and will agree an action plan with parents/carers which is suitable and appropriate for that child.

Cups

- We recommend that babies are given the opportunity to drink from a cup from weaning at six months or when they can sit up unsupported and hold something on their own.
- Babies can be weaned immediately to an open cup with small amounts of liquid to reduce the risk of spills as well as plenty of help and support from the adults around them.
- As a general rule, Pre-school will only offer open cups but a sip cup would be made available to a child with a significant need and support given to wean the child to an open cup in line with this policy.

- Children will, where appropriate, be given plenty of opportunities to play with empty cups so that they can explore and get use to holding them.
- Pre-school staff will support and praise children as they develop onto open cups and wipe up any spillages calmly, patiently and positively when they occur.

Dummies

- We recommend that from six months dummy use is reduced with the aim of moving on completely from 12 months
- If a child who is still using a dummy joins Pre-school, we as professionals will recommend that parents choose an orthodontic dummy as the shape of the teat causes less damage to teeth.
- A dummy will only be used within the setting for sleep times or to soothe when upset.
- Pre-school staff will build relationships with their key children and will learn to tune into their allocated children to understand their needs.
- Pre-school staff will try other ways of soothing or distracting a child, for example, books and singing but will use a child's dummy if he or she continues to be upset.
- Any dummies which are used in setting will be thoroughly cleaned.
- Any dummies which are used in setting are to be stored in labelled, clean, individual containers.

Working in partnership

We will work in partnership with parents/carers and will offer ideas and strategies to move a child on to the next stage of their development in accordance with this policy.

Links with other policies

This policy takes into account our health and safety policy, ensuring that we keep children safe and healthy, and our SEN policy and Care, Learning and Play policy to ensure that children are able to achieve the best possible outcomes for them.

Document History

Date	Change details	Reviewed by
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02/10/18	Policy reviewed – no updates	Donna Manser
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