

Early Years Service

We work with children under 5 living in Hackney who have difficulties with:

- Understanding language and following instructions
- Using words and sentences
- Communicating and playing with their friends and family
- Hearing, listening & attention
- Pronouncing words & sounds
- Stammering or stuttering
- Eating and drinking

Children who are in Hackney schools are seen by their school's link Speech and Language therapist and can be referred via the school's SENCO.

How we work

We work with children and their parents at home, in Children's Centres or in their nursery / playgroups – whichever is best for the child and family.

We work together with lots of other people, including teachers, Health Visitors and Early Support Workers.

Contact details

Speech and Language Therapy

1st Floor D Block
St Leonards Hospital
Nuttall Street London
N1 5LZ
Tel: 020 7683 4262
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"I didn't realise the effect using dummies could have on my child's speech – advice from the therapist helped me to understand this."

Parent of child following speech therapy

Dummies

Reducing the use of dummies: Parent information leaflet



Reducing the use of dummies

Using dummies can have an effect on your child's communication and development of speech sounds

Using dummies

Your child may have started using a dummy in their early days as they may help babies settle and support sleeping. If your child was born early or was sick you may have been advised to use a dummy at the time.

Tips for using dummies

- Always use a dummy with a flat or orthodontic teat. This is less likely to cause damage to their teeth.
- Never dip the dummy in anything, especially anything sweet or sugary.
- Dummies need to be kept clean and sterilised.
- Always remove the dummy from your child's mouth when they are talking.

Dummies and speech

As your child gets older it is important to wean them off their dummy to support their communication and speech development.

What are the effects?

When a baby or young child has a dummy in their mouth, they are less likely to copy sounds adults make or to attempt to babble and play with sounds themselves.

Playing with sounds and babbling are important in the development of speech skills.

Having a dummy for a long period of time may also have an impact on how your child's teeth grow and cause dental problems.

Reducing dummy use

As your baby grows they will need their dummy less and you can support them in reducing the use of it until they no longer use it.

Stopping dummy use is recommended before your child starts to babble, between 8-10 months old.

How to wean

- **Reduce the amount of time your child has their dummy.** Only give them the dummy at nap/bed times.
- **Comfort your child** if they cry by giving them a cuddle, acknowledging their feelings and offering them a favourite soft toy or comforter.

- **Distract your child** by encouraging them to join in with different play activities or going out for a walk.
- **Be consistent** once the dummy is gone. Your child will learn over time that they can settle without it.
- **Reward your child for time without their dummy.** Use praise, sticker charts or fun activities.
- **Talk to your child about giving the dummies away** to someone special e.g. another baby or a fictional character. Once the dummy has gone, tell them it belongs to someone else now and distract or comfort them if they ask for it.

