



Ditch the Dummy

The acts

We know that long-term use of a dummy restrict the movement of the mouth and tongue that is necessary to produce speech sounds correctly, and therefore they are likely to have an impact on children's speech.

The effects of using a dummy could...

- Delay spoken language
- Cause less babbling and experimenting with speech sounds when the dummy is in the mouth
- Develop 'slushy' or 'lispy' speech sounds as a child tries to talk around the dummy and air escapes over the sides of the tongue
- Have a negative affect on teeth and palate, both of which are important for making speech sounds
- Cause excessive drooling as sucking causes more saliva to be produced. This can also be caused by poor lip closure as having a dummy can hinder full development of the mouth muscles needed for drinking
- Be linked to ear infections which can affect children's speech and language development even long after the infection has cleared up

Ideas to ditch the dummy habit

- Explain they are a big girl/boy now and dummies should not be used outside the home.
- Once that is mastered then say it can't be used until bedtime.
- Find another pacifier such as a teddy or a blanket the child can self soothe with.
- Encourage your child to make the decision to give up the dummy. Suggest they could leave it under their pillow for the dummy fairy or encourage them to put it in the bin.
- Don't try to remove the dummy whilst the child is experiencing other changes eg a new sibling.

