

IMPACT OF THE DUMMY

on a child's speech sounds and teeth



A number of speech sounds are produced at the front of the mouth. If a child has a dummy in their mouth it can make it more difficult for them to learn to use these sounds correctly. This can make their speech more difficult to understand.

- The 't' (like in two or tap) and 'd' (like in dog or daddy) sounds are made by tapping the tip of the tongue to the top of the mouth behind the front teeth.
- The 'l' sound (like in lady or lollipop) is made by lifting the tip of the tongue to the top of the mouth.
- Sounds like 's', 'sh' and 'z' are all made by placing the tongue behind the front teeth and pushing air down the centre of the tongue.

Use of a dummy will limit tongue movement particularly at the front of the mouth.



Instead of using front sounds a child may use the back of their mouth so you may hear them say “koy” instead of toy or “gog” instead of dog.

Instead of a clear ‘s’ sound, you may hear a slushy ‘s’ sound – this is because the child is pushing the air down the sides of their mouth.

A dummy can also impact how a child’s teeth grow. Children who use a dummy can develop an open bite where the teeth grow in an arch around the dummy. This can impact their speech sounds and mean they are not able to say certain sounds correctly.



To support speech sound development, try to remove the dummy during the day. Always remove the dummy when your child is talking.

Vision: Everyone in our community working together to help kids talk.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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