



Caring for Babies and Toddlers Policy

At Little Explorers, we care for babies and toddlers under the age of two as well as pre-school children. We are committed to meeting their unique developmental needs by providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment.

We ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our youngest children by:

- Meeting all Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and caring for babies and toddlers in a separate base room within ratio and floor space guidelines.
- Assigning each baby and toddler a key person who works closely with parents to meet the child's individual care routines.
- Employing well-qualified staff who understand the needs of babies and toddlers, ensuring at least half of the team working with under-twos have specific training.
- Facilitating age-appropriate interaction with older children through shared garden time and joint sensory or cooking activities.
- Supporting transitions to older rooms when children are assessed as ready (see Transitions Policy).
- Organising the room layout to support both mobile and non-mobile children and ensuring close supervision at all times.

Environment

- All equipment and the environment are risk assessed and checked daily. This includes cots, highchairs, restraints, pushchairs, and prams.
- Viewing panels and finger guards are installed on all doors to reduce the risk of injury.
- Staff, parents, and visitors remove or cover outdoor shoes in the baby and toddler areas.
- Flooring is cleaned regularly, and sterilisers are washed out daily.
- Heavy furniture is secured to walls.
- Play and learning opportunities are planned based on individual interests and EYFS learning goals.

Resources

- Resources are age-appropriate and free from small parts that could pose a choking hazard.
- Babies and toddlers are closely supervised during all activities.
- Resources that go in children's mouths are sterilised after use.
- Soft furnishings and frequently used toys are cleaned regularly.

- Items such as baby walkers, jumparoos, and pushchairs are only used for short periods (max 20 minutes) to avoid impeding physical development, in line with NHS guidelines.

Intimate Care

- Nappy changes are carried out by the child's key person whenever possible, following individual needs.
- Nappy checks are documented with time and staff initials and shared with parents.
- Toilet training is supported in partnership with parents.
- Potties and changing mats are cleaned after every use.
- Children are never left unattended during nappy changes.
- Intimate care times are used as opportunities for bonding and interaction.
- Pregnant staff undergo risk assessments before participating in changing duties.
- Students may only change nappies with close supervision from qualified staff (see Student Policy).
- Cameras, phones, and recording devices are not permitted in toilet or nappy changing areas.
- Nappy sacks and creams are stored out of children's reach.
- Clean bedding, towels, and spare clothes are always available.

(See Nappy Changing Policy and Respectful Intimate Care Policy.)

Sleep

- We follow NHS and Lullaby Trust safe sleep guidance to minimise the risk of SIDS.
- Each child has labelled bedding, washed weekly or more often if required. Sleep preferences (e.g. sleeping bags) are accommodated.
- Cot mattresses are firm, flat, waterproof, and meet current safety standards.
- Babies are always laid on their back, feet to foot, with no soft toys or bumpers.
- Sheets/blankets are tucked securely and do not rise above shoulder height.
- Loose or damaged bedding is not used.
- Cots are checked for hanging or nearby hazards.
- Babies sleeping outdoors use prams that lie flat and are covered with fly nets.
- Sleep is always supervised, with checks every 10 minutes. Times and staff initials are recorded and shared with parents.

(See Sleep Policy.)

Bottle Feeding

- Feeding is treated as a bonding opportunity. Babies are fed by their key person where possible.
- Bottle and food preparation is completed in a designated kitchen area.
- Formula is made fresh using recently boiled water (cooled for no longer than 30 minutes) and checked with a sterilised thermometer.
- Bottles are prepared exactly as per instructions. If in doubt, a new bottle is made.
- Only trained and competent staff may prepare bottles. Students are supervised.
- Bottles and teats are cleaned in hot soapy water and sterilised. Dishwashers are not used.
- Bottles are discarded after 2 hours if not finished.
- Babies are never left propped with bottles or fed in cots or prams.
- Breastfeeding mothers are welcome and have a designated space.
- Expressed milk is labelled and stored in the fridge.

Mealtimes

- Highchairs are fitted with restraints, which are always used. Children are never left unattended while eating.
- Restraints are washed weekly or more often as needed.
- Mealtimes are seen as valuable social opportunities where staff sit with and talk to children.
- Children are encouraged to feed themselves with support.
- We work closely with parents around weaning.
- Choking risks are carefully managed, and paediatric first aid is administered if needed.

Comforters and Dummies

- Dummies are sterilised and stored in individually labelled containers.
- Dummies are disposed of if damaged.
- Comforters such as teddies or blankets are kept clean and offered during sleep or times of distress.

(See Use of Dummies in Nursery Policy.)

Review This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if needed based on guidance, best practice updates, or following a relevant incident.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Reviewed
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24/01/2022	groberts	15th May 2025
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