



Caring for Babies and Toddlers Policy

Policy Statement

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 that supports their health, wellbeing, and early learning.

We ensure that all practice is in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), safeguarding requirements, and current health and safety guidance.

Staffing and Key Person Approach

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

- Meeting all EYFS requirements, including staff to child ratios of 1:3 for children under two, 1:5 for children from 2-3 years and 1:8 for children 3-4 years and ensuring appropriate floor space is maintained. Specifically 3.5m² per under 2 year old, 2.5m² per 2-3 year old and 2.3m² per 3-4 year old.
- Caring for babies and toddlers in a dedicated base room designed to meet their individual needs.
- Assigning each child a key person who works closely with parents to follow individual routines and provide consistent, responsive care.
- Ensuring all staff working with babies and toddlers are suitably qualified, experienced, and competent to meet their needs.
- Ensuring all staff counted within ratio hold a valid Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification, or are working towards this within 3 months of starting and are not included in ratio until qualified.
- Providing ongoing training, including safe sleep, safeguarding, and child development.
- Supporting age appropriate interaction with older children through planned shared experiences such as outdoor play, sensory activities, and cooking.
- Supporting smooth and developmentally appropriate transitions to older rooms in partnership with parents (see Transitions Policy).

Environment

We provide a safe, clean, and stimulating environment by:

- Carrying out daily checks and ongoing dynamic risk assessments of all areas, equipment, and resources.
- Ensuring all equipment (including cots, highchairs, pushchairs, and restraints) is safe, clean, and suitable for use.
- Installing safety features such as viewing panels and finger guards on doors.
- Requiring staff, parents, and visitors to remove or cover outdoor shoes in baby areas to maintain hygiene.
- Maintaining high standards of cleanliness, including regular floor cleaning and daily sterilisation of equipment.
- Securing heavy furniture to walls to prevent tipping hazards.
- Organising the environment to safely support both mobile and non-mobile children, ensuring close supervision at all times.
- Planning play and learning opportunities based on children's individual interests and developmental stage, in line with the EYFS.

Resources

We ensure all resources are safe and appropriate by:

- Providing age-appropriate toys and equipment that do not pose a choking hazard.
- Closely supervising babies and toddlers during all activities.
- Cleaning and sterilising any resources that are mouthed after use.
- Regularly cleaning soft furnishings and frequently used toys.
- Avoiding the routine use of equipment such as baby walkers and jumparoos, as these may impact physical development. Where used, this is for very short periods and under close supervision.

Intimate Care

We provide respectful and safe intimate care by:

- Following each child's individual care routine, carried out by their key person wherever possible.
- Recording nappy changes, including times and staff initials, and sharing this information with parents.
- Supporting toilet training in partnership with parents.
- Cleaning potties and changing areas after every use.

- Ensuring children are never left unattended during nappy changing.
- Using intimate care routines as opportunities for interaction, communication, and bonding.
- Completing individual risk assessments for pregnant staff where required.
- Ensuring students only carry out intimate care under direct supervision (see Student Policy).
- Prohibiting the use of cameras, phones, or recording devices in intimate care areas.
- Storing nappies, creams, and related items safely out of children's reach.
- Maintaining supplies of clean bedding, towels, and spare clothing.

All intimate care practices are carried out in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Nappy Changing Policy, and Respectful Intimate Care Policy.

Sleep

We follow NHS and Lullaby Trust guidance to minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):

- Babies are placed on their back to sleep, in a feet to foot position.
- Cots are free from soft toys, pillows, and cot bumpers.
- Mattresses are firm, flat, waterproof, and meet current safety standards.
- Bedding is securely fitted and does not rise above shoulder height.
- Each child has individual, labelled bedding, washed regularly.
- Sleep environments are checked for hazards before use.
- Where babies sleep outdoors, individual risk assessments are carried out, and weather and temperature are closely monitored.

Supervision:

- Sleeping children are continuously monitored, remaining within sight and/or hearing of staff at all times.
- In addition, regular sleep checks are carried out and recorded approximately every 10 minutes to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

(See Sleep Policy.)

Bottle Feeding

We support safe and responsive feeding by:

- Treating feeding as a key bonding opportunity, with babies fed by their key person wherever possible.
- Preparing bottles in a designated, hygienic area.
- Preparing formula in line with NHS guidance, using freshly boiled water that is no cooler than 70°C at the time of mixing.
- Following manufacturer instructions carefully; if unsure, a fresh bottle is made.
- Ensuring only trained and competent staff prepare bottles; students are supervised.
- Cleaning bottles and teats in hot soapy water and sterilising them after each use.
- Discarding unused formula after 2 hours.
- Never propping bottles or feeding babies in cots or prams.
- Supporting breastfeeding mothers, including providing a private, comfortable space if required.
- Clearly labelling and safely storing expressed breast milk.

Mealtimes

We promote safe and positive mealtime experiences by:

- Ensuring highchairs are fitted with safety restraints, which are always used.
- Never leaving children unattended while eating.
- Maintaining cleanliness of highchairs and restraints.
- Supporting children to develop independence through self feeding.
- Sitting with children during mealtimes to encourage communication and social interaction.
- Working in partnership with parents during the weaning process.
- Managing choking risks carefully and ensuring staff are trained to respond appropriately.

Comforters and Dummies

We support children's emotional wellbeing by:

- Allowing comforters such as blankets or soft toys, ensuring they are kept clean.

- Sterilising dummies regularly and storing them in labelled containers.
- Disposing of damaged dummies immediately.
- Using comforters appropriately during sleep and times of distress.

(See Use of Dummies Policy.)

Safeguarding

The safety and welfare of all children is paramount. All practices within this policy are underpinned by our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff remain vigilant at all times and follow appropriate procedures if any concerns arise.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, guidance, or following any relevant incident or learning review.

This policy was adopted on	Reviewed
<i>24/01/2022</i>	<i>4th May 2026</i>