



## **Caring for Babies and Toddlers**

**February 2025**

At YMCA Childcare we care for children under the age of two as well as preschool children.

We ensure their health, safety and well-being through the following:

- Implementing the EYFS 2024 requirements at all times and caring for babies and toddlers in a separate base room with a maximum number of children on a minimum ratio of 1:3
- Allocating each baby/toddler with a key person and working in partnership with their parent/carers to meet their individual needs and routines
- Having well qualified staff that understand the needs of babies and toddlers, ensuring that at least half of the staff team caring for children under the age of two have undertaken specific training for working with babies.
- Ensuring babies and toddlers have opportunities to see and play with older children whilst at nursery
- Toddlers transitioning to the older age groups/rooms when assessed as appropriate for their age/stage (see separate Transition Policy)
- Staff supervising all babies and toddlers and organising the environment to support both non-mobile babies and more mobile babies and toddlers.
- Children transfer to the older age group when assessed as appropriate for their age/stage following our agreed transition and settling procedures.

### **Environment**

- The environment, resources and equipment are risk assessed and checked before the children access the rooms/area. This includes checking the stability of cots and areas around, low/highchairs and ensuring restraints on these, pushchairs and prams are intact and working
- All doors are fitted with viewing panels and door finger-guards to prevent accidents
- Shoes are clean, or removed, when entering the baby room. Staff remind parents and visitors to adhere to this procedure. Flooring is cleaned regularly.
- Sterilisers are washed out and cleaned daily
- Play and learning is planned in line with children's individual interests and the EYFS learning and development requirements.





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### **Resources**

- Care is taken to ensure that babies and toddlers do not have access to activities containing small pieces, which may be swallowed or otherwise injure the child
- Babies and toddlers are closely supervised during all activities
- Resources and equipment that babies and young children have placed in their mouth are cleaned/sterilised after use
- All resources are frequently cleaned
- Soft furnishings are frequently cleaned
- The use of baby walkers, bumbos and jumparoos (will only be used for limited periods of time). If used for extended periods of time on a regular basis, these can contribute to delayed physical development. We follow NHS guidelines which recommends that if these resources are to be used then it should be for no more than 20 minutes at a time.

### **Intimate Care**

- Babies and toddlers have their nappies changed according to their individual needs and requirements by their key person wherever possible, or at least every 3 hours and this is recorded.
- When developmentally appropriate, we work closely with parents/carers to sensitively support toilet training in a way that suits the individual needs of the child
- Potties are washed and disinfected after every use. Changing mats are wiped with anti-bacterial cleanser before and after every nappy change
- Staff ensure all the equipment is ready before babies and toddlers are placed on the changing mat
- No child is ever left unattended during nappy changing time
- Intimate care times are seen as opportunities for one-to-one interactions
- Staff do not change nappies whilst pregnant until a risk assessment has been discussed and conducted. Students only change nappies with the support and close supervision of a qualified member of staff (see separate Students Policy)
- Cameras and mobile phones are not permitted in toilet and nappy changing areas
- Nappy sacks and creams are not left in reach of babies and children
- We always follow systems in place to ensure there is an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels and spare clothes





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See separate Nappy changing policy.

### **Sleep**

- Each baby/toddler has labelled nursery bedding which is washed at least weekly and when necessary, this takes into account any allergies and irritation to soap powders and any individual needs for example if a child prefers to sleep in a sleeping bag, we will ask parents/carers to bring one from home
- All cot mattresses/sleep mats meet necessary safety standards
- Safe sleep guidance is followed at all times, babies are always laid to sleep on their back, with their feet touching the foot of the cot. Children under two years are not given pillows, cot bumpers or any soft furnishings in order to prevent risk of suffocation
- We also share safe sleep advice with parents/carers.
- We ensure that sheets or thin blankets come no higher than the baby's shoulders, to prevent them wriggling under the covers. We make sure the covers are securely tucked in so they cannot slip over the baby's head
- Only sheets and blankets that are of good condition are used, any loose threads are removed.
- Cots are checked before use to ensure no items are within reach i.e. hanging over or beside the cot (e.g. fly nets, cables, cord blinds)
- Sleeping babies/children are supervised at all times and checks are completed every 10 minutes. This may increase to five minutes for younger babies and/or new babies. Checks are documented with the time and staff initials on the sleep check form and times are shared with parent/carers.
- Children's individual sleeping bags may be used in consultation with parents. These are washed at least weekly and when necessary
- Babies who fall asleep when outside, when on a walk in prams, must be laid flat to be supported and supervised at all times
- Children will transfer to a sleep mat when appropriate for the age and stage of the individual child whilst also considering health and safety.





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### **Bottles**

- Feeding times are seen as an opportunity for bonding between practitioner and child and where possible babies are fed by their key person
- Food/milk for babies is prepared in a separate (*kitchen/area within the kitchen*) which is specifically designated for this preparation. Handwashing is completed before preparation is undertaken
- Bottles of formula milk are only made up as and when the child needs them. Following the Department of Health guidelines, we only use recently boiled water to make formula bottles (left for no longer than 30 minutes to cool). We do not use cooled boiled water that is reheated. They are then cooled to body temperature, which means they should feel warm or cool, but not hot.
- Formula milk brought from home should be brought into nursery in the original sealed container with the child's name on it. Once opened the date should be clearly marked on the container and only be used for 4 weeks. Children needing specialised formula may bring in daily if required.
- Bottles are only made following the instructions on the formula, if during the making process there are discrepancies, a new bottle will be made
- All new staff will be shown the procedure, and only when competent and confident will they make them on their own. Students are fully supervised.
- Nursery bottles and teats are thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and sterilised after use (they are not washed in the dishwasher). They are replaced as and when required.
- Unwanted/left over contents of bottles are disposed of after two hours
- Babies are never left propped up or laid in a cot or a pram with bottles as it is both dangerous and inappropriate
- A designated area is available for mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies or express milk
- Labelled mothers' breast milk is stored in the fridge/freezer.
- Once babies transition from formula/breast milk to full fat milk, this is then provided by the nursery.

### **Mealtimes**

- All low-chairs used for feeding are fitted with restraints and these are used at all times. Children are never left unattended in low chairs. Restraints are removed and washed weekly or as needed





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- Mealtimes are seen as social occasions and promote interactions. Staff always sit with babies and young children, interacting, promoting communication and social skills
- All children are closely supervised whilst eating and if any choking incidents occur paediatric first aid will be administered
- Babies and young children are encouraged to feed themselves with support, as required
- We work together with parents regarding weaning and offer any support, as required.
- We follow NHS guidance around weaning and feeding.

### **Comforter and dummies**

- We have a separate 'Use of Dummies in Nursery' Policy to promote communication and language development
- If dummies are used, they are cleaned and sterilised. This also applies to dummies which have been dropped on the floor (see separate dummy policy)
- All dummies are stored in separate labelled containers to ensure no cross-contamination occurs
- Dummies are disposed of if they become damaged
- Comforters including teddies and blankets are kept safe and provided at sleep times, or if the child becomes unsettled.

<b>This policy was reviewed on:</b>	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<b>Date for next review:</b>
19.02.2025	K.Streater	18.02.2026
<b>Signed on behalf of YMCA Trinity Group:</b>	A.Spence	

