

Little Thinkers Pre-school and Nursery



Safer Sleep Policy

Introduction

At Little Thinkers, we recognise that sleep is essential for babies' and young children's health, wellbeing, growth and development. Adequate sleep supports children's physical development, brain development, emotional regulation, learning and overall wellbeing. We are committed to providing a safe, comfortable and nurturing sleep environment that meets each child's individual needs while ensuring their safety at all times.

This policy outlines the procedures and expectations for supporting children who sleep whilst in our care. It is designed to ensure that all babies and children are able to rest safely, in line with current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements, Department for Education safer sleep guidance, NHS recommendations and advice from The Lullaby Trust. Staff work closely with parents and carers to understand each child's sleep routines and preferences, while ensuring that safe sleep practices are consistently followed throughout the nursery.

The safety of sleeping children is a priority for all staff. Through robust procedures, regular monitoring, safe sleep training and ongoing risk assessment, we aim to minimise sleep-related risks and provide reassurance to families that their children are cared for in a safe and responsive environment.

Policy Statement

Little Thinkers is committed to promoting safer sleep practices and ensuring that every child who sleeps whilst in our care does so in a safe, supervised and developmentally appropriate environment. We recognise our responsibility to protect children from sleep-related harm and to follow current statutory guidance and best practice. All staff are trained in safer sleep procedures and work in partnership with parents and carers to support children's individual sleep needs whilst maintaining the highest standards of safety and wellbeing.

Sleep location

Children do sometimes fall asleep in practitioners' arms or while playing. We will always move them to a safe secure area to continue their rest.

In all our settings the sleeping arrangement for our children is seen as important and as a key element of safeguarding our children.

Children will not be allowed to sleep in car seats or pushchairs as this can be harmful to their bones and joints. There are a number of safeguards we put in place for our children to ensure safe sleeping:

For children under 2 our guidelines are as follows:

- Children are placed down to sleep on their back.
- They must have their own separate sleep space.
- Sleep surfaces are flat, firm and clear.
- Babies aged 12 months and under must sleep in a cot.
- Mattresses are firm and waterproof.
- Only lightweight bedding is used.
- If blankets are used, children are placed feet-to-foot with blankets tucked below shoulder level.
- No toys, pillows, cot bumpers, nests, wedges, straps or loose bedding is allowed in sleep spaces.
- Rooms for babies is maintained at approximately 16-20°C.
- Babies under six months are always directly supervised by an adult in the same room while sleeping.
- Sleeping children are checked regularly every 10 minutes and those checks are recorded.

Sleep duration and limits

Children's sleep will be responsive to their individual needs. Where possible, children will be allowed to complete a natural sleep cycle, and staff will work in partnership with parents to support healthy sleep procedures.

We aim to follow the baby's established home routine where possible and this is a key part of our discussion when meeting new parents. They can request that their child's sleep is no more than 45 mins and that they do not sleep after a certain time in the afternoon i.e., 3pm. However, if a child is having to be kept awake after an allocated time, then they will be allowed to sleep for 45 mins. Additionally, if a child is due for a scheduled sleep but does not wish to or is becoming distressed then this sleep will not be forced.

Sleep monitoring

Whilst a child is sleeping, they will be checked every 10 minutes by a staff member. This check will be recorded alongside the time they fell asleep and when they wake. A staff member checking a child will spend at least 10 seconds observing that the child is sleeping in a safe position, are comfortable, they are still sleeping and that they are breathing comfortably. In some of our settings this will involve the use of CCTV to monitor the children and when they wake. The use of CCTV will not replace the process of checking but will aid staff in responding immediately when a child wakes.

Preparing for sleep

If the child is being put down for a scheduled sleep, it will be planned for the child to be changed, clean and dry before they are put down. Their shoes will be removed and any jackets, hoodies or cardigans will also be removed. Any objects such as dummy clips, teething necklaces, hair bands or bibs will be removed as these are a strangulation risk. The child will be put in cot, bed or on a mat with a clean sheet and a blanket depending on their age and preference.

Training

All staff receive safe sleep training to ensure they understand and implement current safer sleep guidance and EYFS requirements. Training enables staff to create safe sleep environments, monitor sleeping children effectively, recognise potential risks, and take appropriate action to protect children from sleep-related harm. This helps ensure that every child can rest safely whilst in our care.

Information on Safe Sleeping

The following sources have been used for obtaining and implementing this practice:

References

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2026)
- Department for Education: Safer Sleep Guidance for Early Years Providers (2026)
- The Lullaby Trust: Safer Sleep for Babies
- NHS: Safer Sleep Guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) where relevant to safeguarding responsibilities

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
September 2026	S.Nickerson	September 2027