



Caring for Babies and Toddlers

September 2025 - September 2026

EYFS: 3.1, 3.2, 3.27, 3.32, 3.48, 3.49, 3.55, 3.58, 3.60, 3.61, 3.74.

At Acorn Childcare Centre we care for babies and toddler under the age of two as well as pre-school children.

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

- Always implementing the EYFS requirements and caring for babies and toddlers in separate rooms. Little Acorns (0-24m) has up to 24 children on a ratio of 1:3, Tiny Acorns (0-24m) has up top 12 children on a ratio of 1:3 and Super Seedlings (2-3 years) has a maximum of 24 children with a ratio of 1:4
- Allocating each child 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.

Environment

- The environment, equipment and resources are risk assessed and checked daily 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. Choke tester pots are provided for practitioners to use to ensure all small toys and loose parts meet the required minimum size requirements
- All doors are fitted with viewing panels and door finger-guards to prevent accidents
- Outdoor shoes are removed or covered when entering the baby areas. Staff remind parents and visitors to adhere to this procedure. Flooring is cleaned regularly
- Sterilisers are washed out and cleaned daily

- Large pieces of furniture are fixed to the walls to stop them falling on top of babies and young children

Play and learning is planned in line with children's individual interests and the EYFS learning and development requirements.

Resources

- Care is taken to ensure that babies and toddlers do not have access to resources/activities containing small pieces, which may be swallowed or otherwise injure the child
- Choke tester pots are provided for practitioners to use to ensure all small toys and loose parts meet the required minimum size requirements
- 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

Intimate Care

- Babies and toddlers have their nappies changed according to their individual needs and requirements by their key person, wherever possible. Checks are documented with the time and information is shared with parents
- 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, mobile phones or any electronic devices are not permitted in toilet and nappy changing areas
- Nappy sacks and creams are not left in reach of babies and children
- Each room has a system in place in to ensure there is an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels and spare clothes

Sleep

- Each baby/toddler has labelled nursery bedding which is washed at least weekly and when necessary, this considers any allergies and irritation to soap powders
- Sleeping bags are provided for the 0-12m children
- All cot mattresses/sleep mats meet necessary safety standards

- Safe sleep guidance is always followed, babies are always laid to sleep on their back, with their feet touching the foot of the cot. Children are not given pillows, cot bumpers to prevent risk of suffocation. Children who have a particular comforter such as muslin cloth or teddy will be allowed to take these when going for a nap but practitioners will move them a safe distance away from the child once they are asleep.
- We 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 always supervised and checks are completed every 10 minutes. This may increase to five minutes for younger babies and/or new babies. Our Little Acorns room has a camera monitor to allow practitioners to check on the children, the sleep room always remains open. Sleep checks are documented with the time and staff initials on the sleep check form.

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 an area designated for food preparations. 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. Rapid cooler baby bottle makers are used when preparing baby formula to ensure the optimum temperature for bottles is reached without the need to use bottle warmers or jugs of hot water. Bottles of formula and cows milk are never heated in a microwave as uneven heating can lead to hot spots that can cause burns to a babies mouth, throat and oesophagus
- 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 with us on work placement or training may be required to prepare bottles as part of their training, this will be done whilst they are fully supervised by a senior member of the team.
- 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. Here at Acorn Childcare Centre, we use a combination of microwave steaming and cold-water sterilising to sanitise babies' bottles and dummies. Bowls and cutlery for children under the age of 6months are also sterilised.
- Unwanted/left over contents of bottles are disposed of after one hour

- Babies are never left propped up or laid in a cot 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 or freezer

Mealtimes

- All chairs used for feeding are fitted with restraints and these are always used. Children are never left unattended when eating or when in chairs. Restraints are removed and washed monthly or as needed
- 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.

Comforter and dummies

- 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.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>January 2024 Reviewed September 2025 - SK</i>	<i>Lorna Hodgett</i>	<i>September 2025 September 2026</i>