# Caring for Babies and Toddlers

At the Nest we care for babies and toddlers under the age of two as well as pre-school children.

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

- **Implementing the EYFS requirements at all times and caring for babies and toddlers in a separate base room with a maximum number of 12 under-2s in each room at a minimum ratio of 1:3**
- Allocating each baby/toddler with a key person and working in partnership with their parents/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
- All doors are fitted with viewing panels and door finger-guards to prevent accidents
- Outdoor shoes are removed or covered when entering the baby and toddler area(s). 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

- 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 not be used. If used for extended periods of time on a regular basis, these can contribute to delayed physical development. We follow NHS guidelines and Lullaby Trust 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. Checks are documented with the time and staff initials and information is shared with parents
- Babies'/toddlers' privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting
- 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 and other equipment capable of recording images (Smartwatches, tablets, Meta glasses etc) are not permitted in toilet and nappy changing areas
- Nappy sacks and creams must not be left in reach of babies and children
- We always have systems in place to ensure there is an adequate supply of clean bedding and spare clothes

**See separate Intimate care & Nappy changing policy.**

### Sleep

- We follow the NHS guidance and Lullaby Trust to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

- 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 from 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 in good condition are used; any loose threads are removed.
- Coracles are only used for babies over 12-month-old and are checked before use to ensure no items are within reach i.e. hanging over or beside the coracle (e.g. cables or cord blinds)
- Travel cots are only used for babies under 12 months and are checked before use to ensure no items are within reach, i.e. hanging over or beside the coracle (e.g. cables or cord blinds)
- Babies who sleep outdoors are always placed on their backs in a flat, firm sleep space. We only use prams or sleep equipment that can lie completely flat and provide appropriate support. Babies are closely supervised at all times, and breathable covers (such as cot or fly nets) are used where necessary, ensuring they do not restrict airflow.
- 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 parents/carers.

**See separate safer sleep policy.**

### 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 area within the kitchenette which is specifically designated for this preparation. Handwashing is completed before preparation is undertaken
- Bottles are prepared at home and brought in, in named bottles. (see Milk/Formula Policy)
- 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/leftover contents of bottles are disposed of after two hours
- 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.

### Mealtimes

- All babies and young children are seated safely in low/highchairs used for feeding. The chairs are fitted with restraints, and these are used at all times. Children are never left unattended when eating or when in low/highchairs. Restraints are removed and washed weekly 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
- Staff supervising mealtimes will have ongoing discussions with parents about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including to understand the textures the child is familiar with. Assumptions will not be made based on age
- Food will be prepared in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents to help children move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child
- 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.

**See separate nutrition and mealtimes policy for further details.**

### Comforters 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.

| This policy was adopted on | Signed on behalf of the nursery | Date for review |
|---|---|---|
| *01/09/2026* |  | *01/09/2027* |