

TOP TIPS: Giving up the dummy

Time it right

It's generally wise to wean your baby off his dummy before 12 months. 'That's when he'll often start to chatter,' says Dr Rebecca Chicot, child development expert and co-founder of The Essential Parent Company.

'It's also easier to go cold turkey and take the dummy away in one go before then – he'll get more strong-willed later on and may be less happy to accept the change.'

Slowly cut back

If you want to take a more gradual approach with your younger baby, start reducing the amount of time he has his dummy each day.

Every couple of days, let him have it for five minutes less each time, gradually decreasing it over two or three weeks until you can cut it out completely.

Find a new comforter

Have something to replace your child's dummy, whether that's a comforter or toy.

'A dummy's often used as a sleep aid, so anything else to take this role can make the transition smoother,' says Rebecca.

Bring in the Dummy Fairy

A good one for toddlers – they're a bit more open to negotiation and can understand the idea of a reward.

'Explain that now he's a big boy, the Dummy Fairy will take away his dummy but he'll get a present in return,' says Rebecca.

'Children love being thought of as a grown-up, so with any luck, this may work quite quickly – although you may have a couple of upset nights.'

Even hang it on the Christmas tree for the fairy (or Santa) to pick up.