

## POLICY: 4.1 HYGIENE AND INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

### Procedure: 4.6 Dental Care

Good oral health is more than being free of pain — it's essential for overall health and wellbeing and feeling confident. Good oral hygiene is important at all stages of life. Healthy teeth in childhood set children up for good oral health later in life. Baby teeth hold the space for adult teeth – the early loss of baby teeth can cause crowding of the adult teeth.

Educators can assist the prevention of tooth decay (holes) which can start as soon as teeth appear. Tooth decay is caused by plaque (a sticky film of germs and left-over food) that coats the teeth. By supporting good dental care, educators are able to brush away the acids and prevent plaque building up and over time rotting the tooth away causing a hole to appear.

#### 4.6.1 Linking to Policy

This procedural guidance should be read in conjunction with the service **4.1 Hygiene and Infection Control Policy** and will assist the Approved Provider, Management, Staff (Nominated Supervisors, Coordinators and Administrative Staff members) Educators, Educator Assistants and parents/guardians to implement the policy. The procedure covers:

#### [4.6.2 Supporting good dental and oral hygiene](#)

#### [4.6.3 Putting Oral Health and Hygiene into Practice](#)

#### 4.6.2 Supporting good dental and oral hygiene

##### **The Co-ordination Unit staff will:**

- provide families and Educators with information on dental health practices for children.
- encourage healthy eating which considers the reduction of high sugar-based foods.
- promote dental and oral health practices in line with Queensland Health recommendations:
  - o [6 tips for teeth brushing](#)
  - o [How to prevent infant tooth decay](#)

#### 4.6.3 Putting Oral Health and Hygiene into Practice

##### **Educators will for infants:**

- follow the Queensland Health guidelines around dental and oral hygiene for babies:
  - o The best drinks for an infant are breastmilk, formula or water.

- Only put breast milk, formula or water in an infant's bottle. Hold the infant close when feeding. Do not leave an infant alone to drink the bottle.
- As soon as the infant's teeth appear, talk to families about beginning the process of cleaning teeth.
- If using a dummy, do not add flavouring. Always clean if the dummy falls on the floor.
- Try introducing a cup from about six months of age.
- Remember, infant tooth decay is preventable. If you think an infant has tooth decay, encourage parents to contact a dental professional.

**Educators will for toddlers:**

- encourage families to provide healthy foods for their children while in care. Avoid the use of:
  - sweetened milk, fruit juices, cordials or soft drinks for the children in care
  - sugary snacks or lollies
  - dummies dipped in sweet substances
  - nursing bottles containing anything other than water to help a child fall asleep.

**Educators will for toddlers and young child:**

- Offer water to drink in preference to fruit juice or soft drink.
- Encourage milk or water at mealtimes to help reduce cavities.
- Encourage healthy snacks such as vegetables, cheese, yoghurt, fruit, or plain pasta (Educators should be aware of and avoid foods that are choking hazards to young children).
- Encourage cheese as a meal or snack or at least after one meal as this reduces the harmful effects of acid on the teeth.
- For children who are old enough, encourage them to rinse their mouth with water after each meal or to brush their teeth.
- Report any sign of dental health problems to families e.g. swelling gums, problems with chewing, accidents or injury to teeth or gums.
- Encourage parents to provide a child-sized toothbrush and their own toothpaste.
- Seek permission to support children's oral health through the cleaning of teeth.
- Use the recommendations for Queensland Health - [6 tips for teeth brushing](#) see below

# 6 TOOTHBRUSHING TIPS FOR CHILDREN

Brush twice a day for two minutes

- 1 CHOOSE THE RIGHT TOOTHBRUSH**
  - Use a children's toothbrush with a small head and soft bristles.
  - Small, soft toothbrushes are gentle on the teeth and gums and they are able to reach all areas of the teeth.
- 2 USE THE RIGHT AMOUNT AND TYPE OF TOOTHPASTE**
  - Spread a small (pea-sized) amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
  - Under 18 months – don't use toothpaste. Wet the toothbrush with water to make brushing more comfortable.
  - 18 months to 5 years – use a low-fluoride children's toothpaste.
  - 6 years and older – use a regular strength toothpaste that has at least 1000 parts per million fluoride concentration.
- 3 BRUSHING FOR BABIES AND TODDLERS**
  - Sit babies and toddlers on your lap.
  - Use your free hand to support them to lean back slightly.
- 4 BRUSHING FOR CHILDREN**
  - Children can stand in front of a mirror or basin – position yourself beside them.
  - Ask them to lean their head back slightly and open wide.
  - Use your free hand to help support their chin.
- 5 BRUSH IN SMALL CIRCLES**
  - Move the brush in small circles to clean the teeth and down to the gumline.
  - Clean the insides, outsides (closest to the cheeks) and chewing surfaces of the teeth.
  - Move the toothbrush back and forwards over the chewing surfaces of the teeth.
  - Brush gently for two minutes and make sure you reach the back teeth.
- 6 SPIT DON'T RINSE**
  - Have children spit out any remaining toothpaste once brushing is finished.
  - Discourage children from swallowing toothpaste.
  - Don't rinse with water for 30 minutes after brushing.
  - Rinse the toothbrush and leave it somewhere clean to dry.

## Review

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
Revision 00	07/2015	Original Policy Issued
Revision 01	12/2016	Reviewed
Revision 02	08/2017	Reviewed
Revision 03	10/2020	Reviewed and separated from Policy

## Related Documents

### Policies

4.1 Hygiene and Infection Control Policy

### Reference

Refer to 4.1 Hygiene and Infection Control Policy  
Queensland Health – Oral Health retrieved 16/11/19 -  
<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth>

Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council (2013). Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th Edition), retrieved from <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ch55>