

Early childhood is an important time for developing good dental hygiene practices. From the time a baby starts teething, keeping gums and teeth clean can safeguard against cavities in the 'baby' teeth which can also cause damage to the permanent teeth underneath. Our Centre promotes the importance of good dental health to children and families.

Purpose

We aim to promote children's general wellbeing by creating an environment that supports healthy dental and oral health habits and practices that can be maintained throughout the child's life. Our Centre will provide food and drinks with consideration to the sugar content and ensure that drinking water is always available.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

- Create environments that support good oral health and general health
- Encourage children to make healthy food and drink choices

As a health promoting centre we will provide the oral health of children, educators, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

Implementation

We believe it is important for all children to practice a high level of dental hygiene. We follow the guidelines of the Australian Dental Association and State Government Health Departments when caring for children's teeth.

We provide information and guidelines on good dental health practices, which are implemented into the daily routine, including swish and swallow after mealtimes, providing information about brushing teeth and tooth friendly snacks and drinks, and going to the dentist.

To minimise the risk of cavities forming we encourage children to eat nutritious foods and to avoid sticky and sugary foods. All food served and prepared at our Centre comply with these guidelines by providing a variety of recommended vegetables, fruit, and dairy products. Children will be encouraged to drink water.

Background

Oral health behaviours have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact of growth and development. Early childhood education and care services play an important role in promoting young children's oral health. This is a time when lifelong oral health behaviours are being formed.

Oral health is essential for children's overall health and wellbeing. Oral disease can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay, affecting over half of all Australian children, making it five times more prevalent than asthma. Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being preventable.

Centre Engagement

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Definitions

Oral Health: Eating, speaking socialising without discomfort or embarrassment

Healthy Eating: Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day.

These are:

- Fruit
- Vegetables and legumes/beans
- Grain (Cereal) foods, mostly wholegrains
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives
- Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds and legumes/beans

Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.

Sometimes' food and drink: sometimes foods are high in fat, sugar, and salt combination of these. They typically have very nutritional value are often processed and packaged.

Management/Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will:

- Dental/Oral Health Hygiene information and policy requirements are included during Staff and Educator Induction/Orientation.
- Ensure that food and drinks provided by the Centre adhere to recommendations from organisations such as *Smiles 4 Miles*, and recognised authorities. The Royal Children's Hospital of Melbourne recommends that children should avoid foods and drinks such as:
 - Chocolate
 - Lollies
 - Sweetened breakfast cereals
 - Biscuits
 - Fruit bars
 - Dried fruit
 - Muesli bars
 - Soft drink
 - Flavoured milk
 - Juice
 - Sports drinks
 - Cordial
 - Flavoured water
- Always ensure children have access to safe drinking water
- Ensure the routine incorporates 'swish and swallow' after each mealtime
- Provide information to families about the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)
- Ensure enrolment form contains up to date information about each child's family dentist (in case of emergency)
- Ensure that the daily menu contains a nutritional balance of foods;
- Provide milk at meal time as a source of calcium - dairy products have a proven protective effect in oral hygiene
- Integrates educative information and guidelines on good dental health practices into the daily routine. This should include information on tooth brushing, tooth friend snacks and drinks and going to the dentist and/or dental health professionals.
- Ensure access to safe drinking tap water at all times.

Educators will:

- Provide opportunities to discuss dental health education and food and drink choices to support dental health with children.



- Provide resources to support dental health learning, healthy teeth and gums and correct oral hygiene such as books, posters, 'giant' teeth and tooth brushes, etc.
- Give children bottles before they go to bed. When children take a bottle to bed it allows the lactose (sugar) in the milk to sit on their teeth which can cause tooth
- Arrange visits by dental professionals so that children and families can learn correct brushing techniques and oral care.
- Providing tap water throughout the day which provides fluoride for the teeth
- Act as positive role models for children and families in attendance at the centre.
- Provide dental care information to families through newsletters, posters, professional visits, web links and brochures
- Children will be encouraged to rinse their mouths 'swish and swallow' with tap water to remove food debris after every meal or snack. Educators will supervise such practices.
- Promptly inform family members of any incident or suspected injury or issue with their child's dental health which may include teeth and gums, gum swelling, infection in the mouth, or problems, pain or discomfort the child has with chewing, eating or swallowing food or drink.
- Be aware of dental first aid and receive appropriate professional development opportunities where appropriate.
- Promote Dental Health Week with children and families each year.

Dental Health Procedure

Early Childhood Staff have an important role to play in promoting and implementing good oral health practices. Policies are vital to promote good dental hygiene behaviour in children, to reduce the incidence of dental caries and to facilitate the prevention and management of dental trauma in children.

This will be done by:

1. Displaying Dental hygiene posters at regular intervals at the Centre
2. Providing families with Dental health brochures and information
3. Discussing Dental health with children and with parents via newsletters and meetings
4. Actively seeking, maintaining and providing families with current oral health and nutrition resources from recognised authorities.
5. Providing and maintain a healthy food policy that is consistent with advice from recognised authorities.
6. Providing direct access to and encourage the drinking of fresh water frequently throughout the day and after meal times.
7. Modelling and actively discuss sound oral health practices.
8. Incorporating information on oral health and nutrition into children's learning program.
9. Encouraging and supporting families in seeking dental care where appropriate.
10. Reporting to families any accident, injury or suspected injury to teeth and gums, gum swelling, infection of the mouth, or problems, pain or discomfort the child has with chewing, eating or swallowing.
11. Developing policies and strategies in consultation with public health dental therapists, parents and staff.
12. Providing appropriate dental and oral health education and health promotion programs (including oral health literature for children, families and staff in home languages).
13. For children who are old enough encourage them to rinse their mouth through a swish and swallow technique with water after each meal.
14. Organising the local Dentist to come visit the Centre annually.

Dental Emergency

It is important for educators to be aware of how to manage dental accidents and emergencies.

Our centre will:

- Ensure there is an Educator on duty with current first aid qualifications to follow dental accident procedures
- Ensure procedures for Adminstrating First Aid are adhered to (including completing a Illness, Accident or Trauma record)



- Ensure families are notified of any injury as soon as is reasonably practicable
- Ensure that the phone number of an emergency dentist is located near the office phone
- Ensure children are supervised at all times to minimise accidents and incidents.

Dental Accident Procedure:

Our Centre aims to facilitate the prevention and management of dental accidents of all children by

- Implementing strategies to try and avoid injuries
- Working in consultation with dental professionals and
- Risk management

We will provide Educators with training in dental first aid training which will enable them to:

- Identify the difference between deciduous (baby teeth) and permanent teeth
- Be capable in dealing with dental emergencies
- Apply first aid for a dental injury

A Knocked or Chipped Tooth

If a child has a dental accident where the tooth has been chopped or the whole tooth has been knocked out:

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm and administer first aid
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to find the tooth (A dental professional will want to see the tooth and/or the tooth fragment(s))
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is vital to know if the tooth or tooth fragment(s) has been inhaled. Inhaled teeth are a medical emergency and the child MUST be taken immediately to the Emergency Department of a hospital for a check-up and a possible chest x-ray
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do NOT reinsert the tooth
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently place the tooth or tooth fragments in milk or saline to avoid dehydrating and damaging the delicate cells on the root
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek dental advice as soon as possible
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify parent about the incident
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If required an ambulance will be called to transport the child to the hospital. Time is a critical factor in saving the tooth

Source: Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Australian Dental Association <https://www.ada.org.au/Dental-Health-Week-2020> Australian Government Services Australia *Child Dental Benefits Schedule* <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule> Dental Health Services Victoria: <https://www.dhsv.org.au/oral-health-programs/achievementprogram/early-childhood-education> Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018) [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011) Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020) National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) (2006). Ask a child care adviser: Dental health. *Putting Children First*, 18, 10-12. Raising Children Network: www.raisingchildren.net.au Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Date Implemented: 16/04/2012



National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
Education and Care Service National Regulations		
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices	
78	Food and beverages	
80	Weekly Menu	
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record	
Early Years Learning Framework		
Learning Outcome 3 - Children have a strong sense of wellbeing		
3.1	Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing	
3.2	Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing	

