

SECTION 3

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

3.4 Dental Care Policy

Introduction:

Good oral health benefits children's general health. Good oral health is important for young children to help them eat, talk, smile and develop self-esteem. Deciduous (first) teeth are important as they guide the eruption and development of permanent teeth.

There are many ways to assist children to grow up with healthy teeth including;

- Regular brushing with low fluoride toothpaste.
- Regular dental visits (2 dental checks are recommended before 3½ years of age).
- A nutritious well balanced diet.
- Limiting sugary snacks between meals.
- Only allowing children's water bottles to be filled with water

Aim:

To promote oral health by:

1. Encouraging children, staff and families to understand the value of good oral health and tooth brushing.
2. Facilitating group and individual discussion with children about oral hygiene practices.
3. Encouraging and promoting healthy eating.

Process:

1. The Centre provides written information to parents regarding dental care. This information is located in the front entrance.

Infant Feeding

1. Inappropriate use of infant bottles can increase the risk of "infant feeding caries" (sometimes called "bottle caries"). This is a condition where the child's front teeth appear brown or black and may even be decayed right down to the gum level. The condition is caused by prolonged and frequent exposure of teeth to liquids that contain sugars, especially fruit juice, soft drinks and cordial.

2. The Centre will adopt Oral Health organisations' recommendations that where bottles are used:

- Feeding should be done under adult supervision- when the child has had enough the nursing bottle should be taken away.
- Children should not be left in bed with a bottle.
- Cooled boiled water in a bottle should be used in children under 12 months of age if the bottle is required to comfort the child, or if extra fluid is needed.
- Bottles should only be used for breast milk, formula, milk or water (not fruit juice, soft drink or cordial).

- From 6-8 months children should be introduced to a feeding cup or 'sipper'. In most cases the bottle can be discarded by the age of 12 months.
- Children should be encouraged to drink water when thirsty.

Pacifiers

1. Pacifiers (dummies) should not be dipped in any foods or liquids as this may lead to dental decay.

Teething

1. Children often feel discomfort as new teeth erupt. Signs of teething include increased dribbling, the child may be choosy about foods, the gums may appear red and there may be a slight rise in temperature.

2. Staff will try to provide temporary relief to the child by providing something cold to bite on such as a teething ring or dummy.

3. It is not recommended that staff use lemon juice if any teeth are present as it is very acidic.

Knocked out Teeth

1. The treatment for a deciduous (baby) tooth which is knocked out is:

- Do not replace the tooth back in the socket
- Seek dental advice as soon as possible- take any tooth fragments with the child to the dental professional.

SOURCE: Dental Association of Australia

Relates to Quality Area 2: elements 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.3, National Regulations 168(2)(a)