

Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

- Good dental health behaviour is promoted to help reduce the prevalence of dental caries (tooth decay) in all children
- Facilitation of the prevention and management of dental trauma (accidents) for all children in childcare settings
- Awareness of dental health and dental disease is raised

Explanation

Good oral health is vital to general wellbeing, and early childhood dental hygiene is a key factor in the development of healthy adult teeth. The oral health of Australian children is still of significant concern with 15 per cent of infants suffering dental decay. Dental Health in children has improved in the last decade; however, 50% of children aged 6 years still have tooth decay. The most recent study of dental decay in young children indicated that approximately 84% of children aged 4 years enter their school years with clinically detectable untreated decay.

Risk factors associated with dental decay in children can include late starting of tooth brushing, low frequency of tooth brushing, frequent snacking, prolonged use of feeding bottle, use of dummy dipped in sweet substance and high/frequent sugar consumption.

Goals

- To promote good dental health, hygiene and management for children and families attending our services
- Provide nutritional foods and water for children, advocating for healthy choices while reflecting practices through curriculum planning and role modelling
- Conversations and information are exchanged on dental health to promote good dental hygiene practices and lifelong learning for children and their families

Dental Trauma

- Develop and implement strategies to protect children from falls and damaging their teeth and manage bleeding of the mouth

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February 2016

Policy Last Updated
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- In the management of any dental trauma, the first aider needs to follow a logical sequence in order to estimate the extent of the injury and to make an accurate diagnosis

First Aid for a Knocked Out or Chipped Tooth in a Child

- Remain calm and try to find the tooth
- A dental professional will want to see the tooth and/or the tooth fragment(s). It is important to know whether 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
- If it is a baby tooth, do not put it back in the socket because it will damage the underlying developing permanent (adult) tooth
- Children aged 0-5 years of age are more likely to have baby teeth than permanent teeth. If there is any doubt about whether it is a baby tooth or an adult tooth, put the tooth in milk or saline and take the child to a dental clinic immediately
- If a permanent tooth has been knocked out, place it in milk or saline immediately to avoid dehydrating and damaging the delicate cells on the root
- Do not rinse or scrub dirt off the tooth
- Do not allow the tooth to remain dry at any stage
- Notify parents of the incident
- Go to a dental clinic or the Emergency Department of a Hospital as soon as possible, time is a critical factor in saving the tooth

Remember: In the following weeks or months after the dental injury, if you notice any unusual red or swollen gums in a child's mouth, or if the tooth changes colour, advise the parents to make an appointment at a dental clinic as soon as possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider and Coordinators

- Provide resources and/or Professional Development for Educators and families on dental health practices for children
- Ensure that the daily menus at services that provide meals contain a nutritional balance of foods

- Minimise the provision of sugary foods
- Ensure access to safe drinking water at all times

Educators

- Develop and implement dental health promotion and educational programs in consultation with dental professionals
- Incorporate dental health education in the daily program using 'real' opportunities to discuss these issues with children. These discussions may be a part of mealtime routines, general hygiene routines, cooking activities, discussions about health and nutrition or discussions about home routines and lifestyles
- Provide appropriate and accurate dental health literature for children and families
- Follow nutritional guidelines for healthy teeth
- Provide healthy and nutritious foods low in sugar for the children whilst in care
- Provide families with a Daily Dietary Recommendations Table from Nutrition Australia to assist families with preparing healthy meals for their children at home
- Encourage children to drink water between meals
- Encourage the children to drink milk or water at mealtimes
- Provide water for children to drink and rinse their mouth after meals
- Do not allow children to have bottles in bed or as they go off to sleep. Tooth decay can be reduced by allowing a child to finish their bottle before going to bed and not letting the milk settle on teeth
- Role model healthy practices while at the service
- Report any sign of dental health problems to families e.g. swelling gums, problems with chewing, accidents or injury to teeth or gums
- Encourage families to take their child for regular dental check-ups (once a year is best)

Families

- Refer to the Daily Dietary Recommendations Table from Nutrition Australia for ideas on how to provide healthy and nutritious meals for your children at home and in their school lunchbox

LINKS TO:

- **Education & Care Services National Law**
Section 167
- **Education & Care Services National Regulations**
77, 78, 79, 80, 85, 86, 87, 168, 169, 170
- **National Quality Standards/Elements:**
2.1, 2.2, 7.1.1
- **Child Safe Standards**
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Continual Monitoring and Improvement

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Approved Provider and Coordinators accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Coordinators and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

SOURCES

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Education and care Services National Law
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard - January 2020
- Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services, NSW Department of Education, 2021
- A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020
- ACECQA – FDC Approved Provider compliance responsibilities – October 2017
- Be You
- My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- ECA Code of Ethics
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Administration of First Aid
- Child-Safe Environment
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness
- Nutrition & Safe Food Handling