

# Dental Health Policy

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*Conversations and information exchange on dental health should be encouraged to promote good dental hygiene practices and lifelong learning for children and their families. Dental health will be included as part of everyday practice at our education and care service.*

## National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety	
2.1.	Each child's health is promoted.
2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.
2.2.3	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

## PURPOSE

To promote children's health by creating an environment that supports healthy behaviour including good dental hygiene practices. Our service will encourage dental health by providing nutritional foods for children, avoiding food and drinks that have a sweet and sugary content and ensuring water is available at all times.

Good oral health is vital to general wellbeing and early childhood dental hygiene is a key factor in the development of healthy adult teeth. Encouraging and establishing sound oral health practices early in a child's life will assist in maintaining good oral health and preventing oral disease and other related diseases over a lifetime.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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

We integrate educative information and guidelines on good dental health practices into the daily routine, including swish and swallow after meal times, providing information about tooth brushing, tooth friendly snacks and drinks and going to the dentist.

To prevent cavities forming, or other adverse dental outcomes, we encourage children to eat nutritious foods and to avoid sticky and sugary foods. All food served prepared at our Service complies with these guidelines. Children will be encouraged to drink water to quench their thirst and remain hydrated throughout the day.

### Management/Nominated Supervisor/ Certified Supervisor will:

- Ensure that the daily menu contains a nutritional balance of foods;
- Minimise the provision of sugary foods;
- Ensure access to safe drinking water at all times.

### Educators will:

- Include dental health practices in the program;

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- Support children to access dental health resources for research, exploration and identification. These resources will be available through books, posters and visual aids;
- Talk with children about dental health during the day, encouraging swish and swallow after meal time and having children partake in drinking water throughout the day;
- Pay particular attention to meal and snack times to ensure healthy food is being eaten
- Give children bottles before they go to bed. Tooth decay can be reduced by allowing the child to finish the bottle before going to bed and not letting milk settle on teeth;
- Arrange annual visits by dental health professionals as part of the program. Families and children will be encouraged to attend these visits where correct brushing techniques and dental care will be discussed;
- Provide dental care information to families through newsletters, posters, professional visits, web links and brochures.

**Source**

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard.
- Raising Children Network – [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)
- Health Insite - [www.healthinsite.gov.au](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au)
- Extract from Putting Children First, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Issue 18 June 2006 (Page10-12)

**Review**

Policy Review Date
March 2019

## Dental Health Procedure

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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 service
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 sign of tooth caries, 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. Avoiding the use of: nursing bottles containing sweetened milk, fruit juices, cordials or soft drinks, using food as behavioural rewards, and pacifiers dipped in sweet substances (e.g. honey, jam).
14. Offering water to drink in preference to carbonated drinks, flavoured milk and fruit juices.
15. Limiting the number of times snacks are offered each day. Meal planning incorporates low sugar intake and high calcium intake to support dental health.
16. For children who are old enough encourage them to rinse their mouth through a swish and swallow technique with water after each meal.
17. Organising the local Dentist to come visit the service annually.