



# Dental Health Policy

Indooroopilly Montessori Children's House

Date: Sept 2006

Dates Reviewed: Nov 2007, Feb 2008, **May 2009**

## Rationale

Most Australian children access non-compulsory early childhood services and early childhood staff are in a unique position to guide the development of preventative health practices through the promotion of healthy teeth and gums. This aids the development of life-long oral hygiene habits.

Deciduous teeth (baby teeth) are in the mouth for up to 12 years. They are important because they:

- ◆ enable normal development of the jaw
- ◆ maintain space for permanent teeth
- ◆ enable children to eat nutritious, fibrous foods
- ◆ assist the development of good speech, including the 's' sound
- ◆ help develop self-esteem.

## Aims

We aim to:

- ◆ provide a dental programme for all children in the Centre
- ◆ provide information to parents on dental care and oral hygiene, and
- ◆ Ensure the dental care policy is implemented according to current information from recognised health authorities.

## Implementation

Parents will:

- ◆ receive information on current dental care practices recommended by recognised health authorities through newsletters, posters, pamphlets, signs et, and
- ◆ Provide "teeth friendly" nutritious foods and drinks according to information provided by the Centre and the Centre's nutrition policy.

Staff will:

Implement age appropriate activities to encourage dental health based on individual needs and interests. Such as:

The Director/Management will:

- ◆ provide families with current information on dental health as recommended by recognised health authorities
- ◆ arrange for health care professionals to visit the Centre to talk with staff, children and/or families about hygiene and dental care
- ◆ arrange an annual visit from the Queensland Dental Health Show
- ◆ Arrange for Nth. Brisbane Oral Health to provide each child with a toothbrush and toothpaste (while programme is available).
- ◆ Talk to parents about the effect of sleep time bottles

### **For 0 - 2 year olds**

- ◆ avoiding the use of fluids and foods that are sweet and sticky and giving only water when thirsty and milk when hungry
- ◆ diluting juices with water 50:50 if used
- ◆ avoiding the use of dummies or bottles as pacifiers
- ◆ trying to avoid the use of dummies by drawing the parent's attention to the tooth decay risks associated with their use
- ◆ refraining from using sweet substances on dummies
- ◆ trying to introduce a cup from 6 months
- ◆ trying where possible to encourage the introduction of solids from 6 months of age as these will satisfy hunger and lessen the requirement bottles, and
- ◆ Providing the parents with pamphlets on early dental care.
- ◆ talk to parents about the effect of sleep time bottles

### **For 2 – 3 year olds**

- ◆ providing dolls or toys with teeth
- ◆ providing real and plastic play “healthy foods”
- ◆ Encouraging children to drink a glass of water and “swish and swallow” after finishing their lunch.
- ◆ Talk to parents about the effect of sleep time bottles

### **For 3 – 5 year olds**

- ◆ using lots of action songs and rhymes to encourage learning
- ◆ using books puzzles and games
- ◆ involving children in cooking experiences and use this as a time to discuss dental care
- ◆ using the resource kit “Happy Teeth, Happy Child” Queensland Health 1997 for programme ideas to implement dental health into different developmental areas
- ◆ encouraging the children to drink a glass of water and “swish and swallow” after finishing their meal.
- ◆ Encouraging the children to be involved in the cutting and eating of a variety of fruit and vegetables.
- ◆ Talk to parents about the effect of sleep time bottles

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#### Sources:

Early Years Training Group.  
Happy Teeth Happy Child – Queensland Health 1997.

Principle 6.3

**Dental Health Infants**

It is important that first teeth are looked after. Strong healthy teeth require a good diet, fluoride and proper dental hygiene practices.

One of the main causes of decay in very young children is the sleep-time bottle as a pacifier, or allowing the child to walk around with a bottle for extended periods of time.

Prolonged exposure to Vitamin C syrup, juice or even plain milk, can cause extensive tooth decay.

Young children's teeth have not had the exposure to fluoride and are not hard like adults and therefore decay more readily.

When the child has a bottle to assist sleep, the sugars in juice or milk pool against the child's teeth for hours. These carbohydrates react with the bacteria in the mouth causing an acid build up. This produces plaque on the tooth surfaces, which begins to dissolve the tooth enamel.

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Source:

A Practical Guide to Working with Children, Egle, 2006.