DENTAL HEALTH POLICY

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 Service promotes the importance of good dental health to children and families.

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 SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
78	Food and beverages
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy Health and Safety Policy	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Nutrition and Food Safety Policy

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 Service will provide food and drinks with consideration to the sugar content and ensure that drinking water is always available.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service believes 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, , 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 Service comply with these guidelines by providing a variety of recommended vegetables, fruit, and dairy products. Children will be encouraged to drink water.

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL:

- ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- ensure educators, staff, students and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure
- ensure that food and drinks provided by the Service adhere to recommendations from organisations such as *Munch and Move (NSW)* and the Department of Health and Age Care program *Get Up and Grow*, and other 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)
- organise a dental service to come on site annually

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 such as books, posters, 'giant' teeth and toothbrushes, etc.
- pay particular attention to meal and snack times to ensure healthy food is being eaten
- 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 decay.
- never dip dummies in sweet foods such as honey or jams as this could cause severe tooth decay
- arrange visits by dental professionals so that children and families can learn correct brushing techniques and oral care
- provide dental care information to families through newsletters, posters, professional visits, web links and brochures
- promote Dental Health Week with children and families each year.

DENTAL EMERGENCIES

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

- ensure there is an educator on duty at all times with current first aid qualifications to follow dental accident procedures
- ensure procedures for Administrating First Aid are adhered to (including completing an 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.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Dental Health Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

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-advice/Professionals/early-childhood
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023)
Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023)
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).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Krystle Hills	Centre Manager	25/09/2024
POLICY REVIEWED	SEPTEMBER 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	SEPTEMBER 2025
MODIFICATIONS	• policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • minor formatting edits within text		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
October 2023	• annual policy review • links to health programs added within policy • sources checked for currency • continuous improvement/reflection section added CCD related resources added		September 2024