

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



2.12 Dental Health

Background

Healthy teeth and gums are necessary for general good health. They play an important part in the digestion of food, correct speech and self-confidence through enhancing our appearance. Keeping healthy primary (baby) teeth until they fall out naturally is crucial in maintaining the space for permanent (adult) teeth.

Given the number of children who attend childcare and the length of time they spend in care, childcare plays a significant role in the prevention of teeth and gum diseases in young children, and in the development of healthy teeth and gums. Further, childcare provides the ideal opportunity to instil in children long-term oral health habits.

Policy statement

The Service promotes good dental habits, and is also committed to minimising any risk to children's dental health from food and drink consumed at the Service. The Service follows recommendations from the recognised dental health authorities, and provides this information to families.

Strategies and practices

- The *Dental Health Policy* is provided to parents when they enrol their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under this Policy. The *Dental Health Policy* is also included in the Parent Handbook given to all parents. QA 2.1.3
- The oral health message is promoted amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, verbal communication, pamphlets and dental health educational materials, and the celebration of Dental Awareness Month. Due consideration is given to home languages. QA 2.1.3
- Children are given water when thirsty. QA 2.2.1
- Educators use opportunities that arise during children's play and at meal and snack times to talk to the children about dental health issues. The Service resources include plastic 'healthy food,' and toys and dolls with teeth. When appropriate to children's interest and the program, educator's intentionality teach children about looking after their teeth through activities such as: action songs and rhymes; books puzzles and games; food preparation; and, cooking experiences. QA 2.1.3
- To ensure that children receive early positive experiences, the Service arranges for dentists and appropriate allied dental health professionals to visit the Service to talk to the children about dental hygiene. QA 2.1.3

Additional safe practices for babies (0-2yrs)

- Mothers are encouraged and supported to breastfeed.
- Only milk or water is used in baby bottles.
- Fluids may be introduced in a cup from 6 months of age.

Acorn Child Care Centres Policies and Procedures



- Educators do not put children to sleep with milk or formula in their bottles. Educators remove a child’s bottle as soon as feeding is completed.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide each day a drink container for their child only containing water.
- We ask that parents do not bring food into the centre except celebration occasions.

Links to other policies

- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- Queensland Health. Happy Teeth Resource Kit.
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth/promo_programs/happy_teeth.asp accessed 22 November 2123
- Centre for Community Child Health – <http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/>
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au>
- The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne. *Childcare and children’s health: An information sheet for parents (Oral Health)* Vol 14 No 2 June 2011

[http://www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/CCH_Fact_Sheet - Oral health.pdf](http://www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/CCH_Fact_Sheet_-_Oral_health.pdf) accessed 22 November 2013

Date(s) reviewed:

15/03/2016							
15/04/2017							
06/09/2018							
15/07/2019							

Next review Date: 15/07/2020