
Subject: Tooth Brushing

Source: Early Head Start Performance Standard 1304.22

Policy

Early Head Start classrooms will practice two supervised tooth-brushing activities per day. Teachers will assist children with good oral hygiene by promoting tooth brushing after each meal.

Procedure

1. Teachers will use a wet gauze pad to clean the gums of infants and young children without teeth. They will have their gums massaged twice a day, following meals.
2. Teachers will switch from using gauze to using a toothbrush when a child turns one year old.
3. Each child will have his/her own toothbrush, which will be labeled with his/her name.
4. Teachers will guide children in the proper technique to brushing teeth, and children with disabilities will be supported with any needed adaptations.
5. Toothbrushes will be stored in the toothbrush tray, located out of the reach of children, and covered by netting to prevent contamination.
6. The toothbrush holder will be washed with warm water and soap and allowed to air dry, as needed.
7. Each child will receive a new toothbrush four times a year, and a toothbrush will be sent home with each child at the end of the school year.
8. The sink area will be sanitized by staff before and after tooth-brushing activities.

In order to prevent cross-contamination:

1. To prevent cross contamination of the toothpaste tube, teachers will ensure that a pea-size amount of toothpaste is always dispensed onto something other than the toothbrush first. (wax paper, edge of the paper cup, etc.) **** (Do Not Use Toothpaste Tube To Dispense Toothpaste onto the Brushes).**
 2. Classroom procedure will ensure that child is given only his or her toothbrush.
 3. Class procedure will insure that children do not have the opportunity to spit onto or near other children's toothbrushes. It is the responsibility of teaching staff to determine the procedure that works best for their classroom.
 4. Classroom staff will insure that toothbrushes are rinsed and stored properly after use.
 5. Teething toys will be kept clean and never shared. Toys should be decontaminated as needed, and at the end of each classroom day.
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