



Dental Health Resource Package for Childcare Professionals



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Foreword

There are important reasons for promoting dental health in young children:

- Tooth decay is the single most chronic common childhood illness. However, it is mostly preventable through effective oral hygiene measures and a healthy diet.
- Good dental health is an essential part of good general health and well being and is now increasingly recognised as being related to various lifestyle factors, such as poor diet/nutrition and limited exposure to fluoride.
- The primary dentition ('baby' or deciduous teeth) is important for young children to develop their eating ability, speech patterns, appearance, and later to guide the eruption and position of their permanent teeth.

Childcare services provide ideal settings to promote good dental health. Childcare staff play a significant role in the education and modelling of healthy behaviours to young children and their families. They have the opportunity to:

- set guidelines and policies within the centre
- promote positive eating and oral hygiene habits in children
- assist in creating desired and healthy behaviours for parents, carers and families.

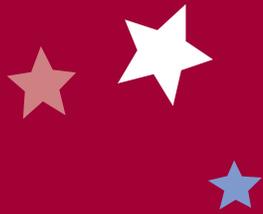
[NSW Little Smiles](#) is a dental health resource package that has been developed by the NSW Little Smiles Advisory Committee. The aim of the package is to assist childcare services across NSW to create an environment that is supportive of good dental health for children and their families. Parent information will be made culturally appropriate for the Aboriginal community and translated into different languages within 12 months.

[NSW Little Smiles](#) is a component of the NSW Early Childhood Oral Health (ECOH) Program, which aims to positively affect the oral health status of children at an early age by working with key partners to develop model approaches and best practices for oral health promotion and disease prevention.

I would like to sincerely thank those committed people, and the organisations they represent, who have been involved in the development of this important resource.

Dr Clive Wright

Chief Dental Officer, Centre for Oral Health Strategy
NSW Department of Health
May 2010



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- Hunter New England Area Health Service, for piloting the Little Smiles program
- NSW Oral Health Promotion Network
- Early Childhood Oral Health (ECOH) Advisory Committee, NSW
- Queensland Health (Happy Teeth)
- Dental Health Services Victoria (Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services)
- Dr Juliette Scott, Specialist Paediatric Dentist
- Ms Mara Cvejic, Graphic Designer, Westmead Centre for Oral Health, SWAHS



Introduction

Dental caries (tooth decay) is one of the most common diseases in childhood. A particularly damaging form, early childhood caries (ECC), can begin at a very young age when developing primary (baby) teeth are especially vulnerable.



ECC is a serious dental condition occurring during the early years of life and is associated with frequent intake of sugary food and drinks and may occur in young children who are given pacifying bottles of juice, milk or formula, and soft drink or cordial to drink for prolonged periods during the day or overnight.¹

Severe dental decay undermines the quality of life of young children through pain and problems with sleeping, eating and behaviour.² It is vitally important to promote and maintain good oral health, especially in children under five years because of the influence on the eruption and position of their permanent teeth.³ There is evidence suggesting good oral health in infancy and early childhood contributes to better general health in adulthood.^{4,5}

Early childhood is the time when most lifetime habits are established. It offers the greatest opportunity to provide socialisation for good health and primary prevention of dental decay. Parents are generally receptive to new health information and have considerable contact with primary health care workers^{6,7}, and/or childcare workers^{8,9}, who are in an excellent position to provide appropriate oral health information.

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Little Smiles Overview

Little Smiles is a dental health resource package that aims to reduce tooth decay in children aged 0-5 years. The package focuses on assisting childcare professionals to encourage young children to establish good dental and nutrition habits from an early age, which can maintain the health of their teeth and gums for life.

Little Smiles consists of a set of resources that can influence three components of learning:

- facility policies and routines
- childcare programs and curriculum
- childcare staff and parents/carers.

The package contains:

- a (sample) dental policy that enables your facility to develop an individual policy to meet the requirements of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Inc.
- a suite of age appropriate dental activities that can be incorporated into childcare programs and curriculum
- dental information for parents/carers
- a CD of dental songs.

A **Dental Information Session** for childcare staff is also available, free of charge, through your local Public Dental Service. The session provides basic information about teeth, tooth decay (causes, prevention and how to identify it) and accessing public dental services.

Further information can be provided by contacting the Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW on (02) 8821 4300 or visiting the website: www.health.nsw.gov.au/cohs





Sample Dental Policy for Childcare Settings

A **dental policy** is required for accreditation purposes for discreet childcare settings.



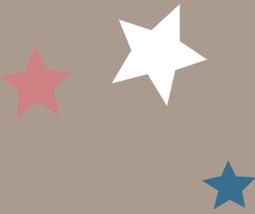
NSW Little Smiles aligns with the National Childcare Accreditation Council's (NCAC) principle standards relating to dental hygiene awareness and eating habits.¹⁰

The following information provides a **sample dental policy** for childcare settings. Childcare professionals are able to use this sample as a framework to develop their own unique policy for their facility.

By consistently implementing the dental policy in your childcare setting ensures that effective dental health and hygiene practices are carried out while children are in care.

This sample policy will be updated by the Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW, as new information becomes available.

¹⁰. http://www.ncac.gov.au/publication_extracts/qias_qpg_preambles.pdf



Policy

A. To promote good dental health behaviour to help reduce the prevalence of dental caries (tooth decay) in all preschool children.

B. To facilitate the prevention and management of dental trauma (accidents) for all children in childcare settings.

Background

(a) The dental health of Australian children has improved over recent decades, with a dramatic decline in the experience of dental caries. However, there are clear inequalities in dental health with higher rates of dental caries in all children living in socially disadvantaged areas, rural and remote areas, and among Aboriginal children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. There are also a small but significant proportion of preschool children who suffer very severe and extensive dental decay requiring hospitalisation and treatment under general anaesthesia.

(b) Once a child begins to walk accidents involving the mouth are common. Injuries may vary from small chips (fractures) to the tooth being knocked out (avulsed).

Therefore, a dental health policy in childcare settings is important to:

(i) promote good dental health behaviour in all children (and parents) to help reduce the prevalence of dental caries, especially in all children who are in the high risk category

(ii) facilitate the prevention and management of dental trauma in all children in childcare settings

(iii) raise the awareness of dental health and dental disease with childcare personnel.

Related Legislation

- NSW Government. Children's Services Regulation 2004. Available from <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/fullhtml/inforce/subordleg+260+2004+FIRST+0+N>.
- National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc. National Childcare Accreditation Council Quality Practices Guide. Available from <http://www.ncac.gov.au/>.

Key References

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A. Good Dental Health Behaviour Practice

To promote good dental health behaviour and help reduce the prevalence of dental caries (tooth decay) in all preschool children.

Childcare staff should:

In General

Develop and implement dental health promotion / education programs in childcare settings, in consultation with dental professionals (eg provide appropriate and accurate dental health literature for children, parents/carers and childcare staff).

Oral Hygiene and the Prevention of Tooth Decay

- Putting a baby to bed with a bottle of milk, juice or any sweet liquid can cause tooth decay.
- Honey, glycerine, condensed milk or other sticky, sweet foods or liquids on a baby's dummy can cause tooth decay.
- Children have high nutritional requirements so they usually need to have more frequent meals. It is appropriate to provide 6 small meals for children daily. However, it is important to limit the number of times sugary snacks are offered as they are a major cause of tooth decay.
- Offer children a varied selection of healthy snacks, such as: vegetables (eg corn cobs, carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes), cheese, hard boiled eggs, baked beans, fresh fruit, cold cooked pasta, and wholemeal bread with lean meat.
- Choose snacks that are appropriate to the age of the child.

Note: Up to 2-2½ years of age, small hard pieces of food such as nuts and seeds, carrots, apples and celery should be avoided as they could be inhaled and induce choking in young children.

- Tap water (boiled till 12 months of age) is the best drink in-between meals and at bedtime.
- Provide water for children to drink and rinse their mouth with after meals.

Report to the family any signs of:

- visible decay
- gum swelling
- infection of the mouth (gums are very red or bleeding)
- problems chewing, eating, swallowing
- the child complaining about oral discomfort and pain
- the child complaining about being woken up at night with a sore tooth.

Advise all parents/carers to take their child to a dental professional as soon as possible.

(Refer to Appendix A for a sample form for parents)

- Encourage all parents/carers to take their child for regular dental checkups (once a year is best).
- All children should have their teeth checked at each child health visit.
- All children should have a dental assessment by a dental professional by the end of their second year.



Tooth brushing

- The use of fluoride toothpaste for the prevention and control of dental caries is internationally recognized as being both safe and highly effective.
 - Children who brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste have better dental health than those who brush less frequently.
 - Adults are advised to keep their own teeth and gums healthy through regular brushing with fluoride toothpaste. Bacteria can pass over to a baby's mouth on dummies, bottles and spoons.
 - Childcare staff should actively encourage all parents / carers to brush their children's teeth morning and night after eating.
 - Toothpaste should be stored where children cannot reach it or eat it.
- Children should spit out, but not swallow and not rinse. Spitting out toothpaste and not rinsing for half an hour will provide additional benefits in helping prevent tooth decay.
 - Toothpaste may be introduced earlier based on the advice of a dental professional.
 - Toothpaste should always be used under supervision of an adult. Toothbrushing skills should be taught to all children of all ages but adults should brush a child's teeth up until eight years of age.
 - The easiest way to brush a toddler's teeth is to:
 - stand behind them
 - support their head with one hand and hold the toothbrush with the other
 - look directly into the child's mouth or into a mirror to see where to brush.

Infants

- As soon as the first teeth appear, at around 6 months, they should be cleaned using a child-sized soft toothbrush, but not with toothpaste.
- The easiest way to brush an infant's teeth is to:
 - sit, or lay, the child on your lap
 - support child's head
 - clean teeth gently.

Toddlers

- From around 18 months of age teeth should be cleaned twice a day with a small pea-sized amount of low fluoride toothpaste (0.4-0.55mg/g fluoride), and a child sized soft toothbrush.



Parent and Child Dental Education Program

The following key points may be useful for childcare staff wishing to develop and implement educational programs for children and their parents/carer.

- Educational programs for children and their parents/carer must be developed using a partnership approach between childcare personnel and dental professionals.
- NSW Little Smiles offers a wide range of age appropriate dental health activities for childcare personnel to use.
- NSW Little Smiles provides dental information for parents / carers.



B. Dental Trauma (accidents) Practice

To facilitate the prevention and management of dental trauma (accidents) of all children in childcare settings.

In general

Develop and implement strategies to protect children from falls and damaging their teeth; and manage bleeding of the mouth in all childcare settings. Consultation with dental professionals and facility risk managers is important.

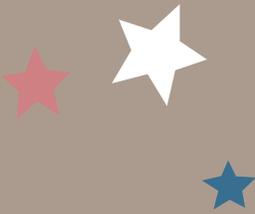
First Aid for a Knocked Out or Chipped Tooth in a Child

In the management of any dental trauma, childcare personnel need to follow a logical sequence in order to estimate the extent of the injury and to make an accurate diagnosis.

The following sequence should be followed when a tooth is knocked out of its socket:

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remain calm and try to find the tooth. A dental professional will want to see the tooth and/or the tooth fragment(s). It is important to know whether the tooth or tooth fragment(s) has been inhaled.• Inhaled teeth are a medical emergency and the child MUST be taken immediately to the Emergency Department of a Hospital for a check-up and a possible chest x-ray.
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If it is a baby tooth, do not put it back in the socket because it will damage the underlying developing permanent (adult) tooth. Children aged 0-5 years of age are more likely to have baby teeth than permanent teeth. If there is any doubt about whether it is a baby tooth or an adult tooth, put the tooth in milk or saline and take the child to a dental clinic immediately.• If a permanent tooth has been knocked out, place it in milk or saline immediately to avoid dehydrating and damaging the delicate cells on the root. Do not rinse or scrub dirt off the tooth. Do not allow the tooth to remain dry at any stage.• Notify parents / carers of the incident.• Go to a dental clinic or the Emergency Department of a Hospital as soon as possible. Time is a critical factor in saving the tooth.

Remember In the following weeks or months after the dental injury, if you notice any unusual red or swollen gums in a child's mouth, or if the tooth changes colour, advise the parents/carers to make an appointment at a dental clinic as soon as possible.



Professional Development for Childcare Staff

Professional development is an integral component for all childcare staff and opportunities to extend professional development are encouraged. Management, staff, families and their children all benefit when the practices in childcare settings are regularly reviewed and updated in light of current recommended research and practice.

A Dental Health Information Session for childcare staff is available, free of charge, through your local Public Dental Service.

Dental health resources are available at:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/cohs/. For hard copies refer to Appendix B for order form.

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Dental Activities for Children

Providing activities that pertain to dental issues and encourage and reinforce good dental and nutritional behaviours for children is one of the aims of this package.

The following activities can be performed in your daycare facility as part of the everyday program for children from 2-3 years old.

Activity	Materials
Puzzles*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knob puzzles – food theme • Felt board – food theme
Cooking session*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can make faces, rockets with food.
Role play / dress up*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can pretend to clean the teeth of dolls or teddy bears after breakfast and before putting them to bed. • Dentist: gown, mask, gloves & dental mirror. • Patient: sunglasses, bib & chain.
Excursion to the dentist*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local dentists or your public dental clinic

* Refer to **Appendix C** for contact details

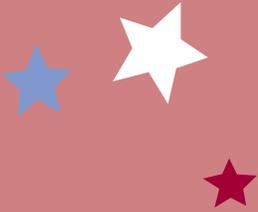
Home corner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic food and empty food packets can be used for play acting shopping or preparing meals. • Empty packets of ‘everyday’ and ‘sometimes’ foods and drinks.
Healthy/unhealthy collage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect food pictures from magazines and have children divide pictures into ‘everyday’ and ‘sometimes’ food and drink groups.
Craft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make egg carton mouth models and have children count the teeth.
Toothbrush painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use toothbrushes as an alternative to ordinary paint brushes when painting.
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various dental books are available from http://www.americasdentalbookstore.com/childrensbooks.htm • Read & Play http://www.readandplay.com
Games and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games and activities for children from 2 years old. http://www.colgate.com/app/Kids-World/US/Games-And-Activities.cvsp
Dental programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colgate: Bright Smiles Bright Futures Preschool Program (free) 1800 075 685



Dental Activities for Children (cont.)

<p>Songs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Songs are on the CD provided in this resource manual. (Refer to Appendix D for lyrics)
<p>Swig, Swish, Swallow Activity - after lunch or snacks</p>	<p>Often a meal or snack will leave food particles in the mouth. The aim of the Swig Swish Swallow activity is for the children to learn how best to rinse their mouth out with water after meals and snacks.</p> <p>* Sing the Swig, Swish, Swallow song before the activity below.</p> <p>Step 1 - Swig</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have drink bottles with tap water (fluoridated water). After lunch and snacks the children can go outside or to a suitable wet area (as there may be water spills). Have children 'swig up' a mouth full of water and hold it in their mouths. <p>Step 2 - Swish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on the age and ability of children, either have children 'swish' or swill the water around their mouth (ie. shake head from side to side or use cheeks to do so). <p>Step 3 - Swallow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask children to swallow the water. Ask children to open their mouths wide and then smile to show their happy teeth! <p><i>(adapted from Tiddalick's Tale©).</i></p>





Dental Discussions with Children

The following information provides examples of discussions that you can have with children around dental issues, using the messages for a healthy mouth. The pictures provided can be used in appropriate ways to help children to answer the questions posed.





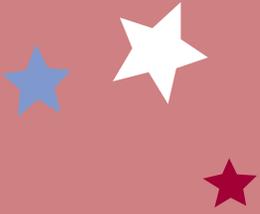
Dental Discussion with Children (cont.)

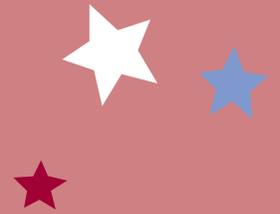
EAT WELL

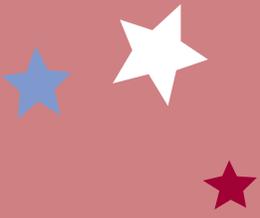
Key messages for children:

- You need food to help your body grow, play and think. Just like a car needs petrol to move you need food to help you move.
- ‘Everyday’ foods can be eaten everyday because they are good for you. They give you energy so you can grow, play and think.
- ‘Everyday’ foods are fresh fruit, cheese, vegetables, sandwiches and soups.
- ‘Sometimes’ foods have a lot of sugar.
- Sugar can make holes in your teeth and make them sore.
- ‘Sometimes’ foods are lollies, biscuits, cakes, chocolate, muesli bars.
- ‘Sometimes’ food should be kept for special occasions like birthday parties.

Questions	Answers
Why do we need food?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food helps our body to grow, play and think. • Just like a car needs petrol to move I need food to help me move.
What foods should you eat everyday to help your bodies to grow, play and think?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit, vegetables, cheese, bread.
What are ‘sometimes’ foods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lollies, biscuits, cakes, biscuits, muesli bars, chocolate.
Why can’t you eat sometimes foods everyday?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have too much sugar. • They can make holes in my teeth and make them sore.
When can you have sometimes food?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special occasions like birthday parties.









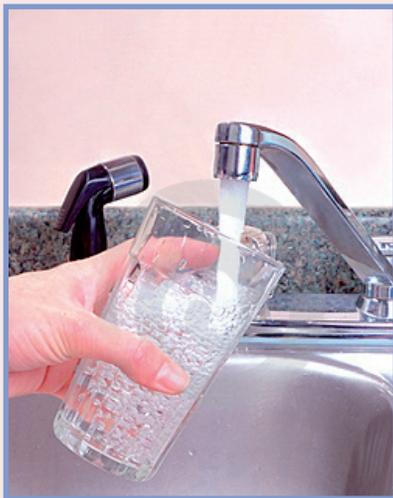
Dental Discussions with Children

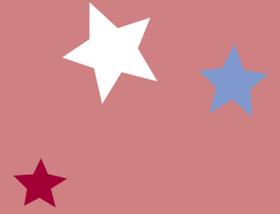
DRINK WELL

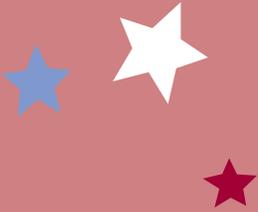
Key messages for children:

- Water cleans your mouth. It keeps your teeth and body healthy.
- When you're thirsty water is the best drink. You should drink water everyday.
- Tap water has fluoride in it, which makes your teeth strong.
- 'Sometimes' drinks have a lot of sugar and they can put holes in your teeth and make them sore.
- 'Sometimes' drinks are milk shakes, fruit juice, cordial, fizzy drinks. They should be kept for special occasions like birthday parties.
- When you're a big boy or big girl you should drink out of a cup, not a baby bottle.

Questions	Answers
Why should you drink water?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps to keep my body and teeth healthy. • It helps to clean my mouth. • Water is the drink I should have when I'm thirsty.
What does tap water have in it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluoride
What does fluoride do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes my teeth strong.
Which drinks should you only drink sometimes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk shakes, fruit juice, cordial, fizzy drinks.
Why can't you drink 'sometimes' drinks everyday?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have too much sugar. • They can make holes in my teeth and make them sore.
When can you have sometimes drinks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special occasions like birthday parties.
Who should drink out of a baby bottle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only little babies - not big boys and girls.







Dental Discussions with Children

CLEAN WELL

Key messages for children:

- Cleaning your teeth with toothpaste makes your teeth strong and healthy – and you only need a little bit, about the size of a pea.
- If you don't clean your teeth they can get holes and that makes them sore.
- A big person like mummy or daddy needs to help you brush your teeth.
- Your teeth need to be brushed with toothpaste every morning after breakfast and every night before you go to bed.
- You should spit out the toothpaste after you finish brushing.

Questions	Answers
What do you do to help your teeth stay strong and healthy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat healthy food and drink water • Clean my teeth.
What can happen to your teeth if you don't clean them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can get holes in them and that makes them sore.
What do you put on a toothbrush?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toothpaste.
How much toothpaste should you have on your toothbrush?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of a pea.
When should you clean your teeth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the morning <u>after</u> breakfast and at night <u>before</u> I go to bed.
What do you do after you finish cleaning your teeth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spit out the toothpaste.
Who should help you brush your teeth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A big person like mummy or daddy.





Dental Discussions with Children

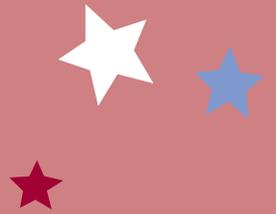
STAY WELL

Key messages for children:

- Visiting the dentist helps to keep your teeth healthy
- Dentists are special people who help you look after your teeth.
- You should have your teeth checked by a dentist before you are 3 years old.
- You have 20 teeth by the time you are 3 years old.
- Your mum or dad can lift your lip to look for tooth decay.
- You should always put on sunscreen, a hat and a shirt when you go outside in the sun.
- No one should smoke in your home or when you're in the car.

Note: The term 'dentist' has been used for simplicity. Children could also be seen by a dental therapist or oral health therapist.

Questions	Answers
How many teeth do you have once you're 3 years old?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20
Has anyone visited the dentist? What do dentists do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help me look after my teeth.• Look at my teeth.
How can mum or dad check your teeth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By lifting my lip to look for tooth decay.
When should you have your teeth checked by a dentist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before I'm 3.
What can you do to stop the sun from burning your face and lips when you are outside?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear a hat and a shirt and put sunscreen on my lips and face before I go outside.







Dental Information Fact Sheets

Sharing knowledge with parents/carers, and encouraging them to foster and reinforce good dental and nutritional behaviours for their children, is one of the aims of this package.

The following fact sheets are based on the best scientific evidence available and are designed to provide childcare staff with easy to understand, basic dental information that can be distributed to parents/carers. The information can be placed in newsletters or used on news boards in your facility.

- Baby Teeth
- Teething
- Tooth Decay
- Tooth Decay in Young Children
- Tooth Brushing
- Tooth Brushing Technique
- Tooth Brushing Chart
- Dental Checks
- Thumb Sucking & Dummies
- Messages for a Healthy Mouth
- Tips for Mini Meals & Snacks
- Healthy Dinner Ideas
- Pregnancy and a Healthy Mouth

Note: These fact sheets are available on the NSW Health internet site in black and white for photocopying <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/cohs/resources.asp>

They will also be made culturally appropriate for the Aboriginal community and translated into different languages within 12 months.



Dental Information Fact Sheets

Baby Teeth

When do baby teeth come through?

Baby (deciduous) teeth start to come through the gums at around six months. By three years a child has a full set of 20 baby teeth. A baby tooth is in the mouth for up to 12 years before it falls out. The table below shows the age the teeth come through.

Type of tooth	Age
Front teeth	6-12 months
First back molars	12-20+ months
Baby eye teeth	18-24 months
Baby second molars	24-30 months



Why are 'baby' teeth important?

- Healthy baby teeth are crucial in helping your baby learn how to speak properly.
- Healthy and nice looking teeth are important in building self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Baby teeth provide space for the permanent teeth.
- Baby teeth are important in proper feeding and nutrition.
- There is a potential link between the number of cavities a child has and the probability of the child being underweight.

Therefore, baby teeth need to be cared for to remain in good condition and free of tooth decay until they fall out naturally.



Dental Information Fact Sheets

Teething

- Teething is a normal part of every child's development.
- It starts when the first baby tooth cuts through the gum, at about 6 months and can continue until a child is 3 years of age.
- When babies start to teethe they drool more and want to chew on things. For some babies teething is painless; others may experience brief periods of irritability. The gums may appear red and swollen and, if pressed, may feel hard and pointed.
- If a child is uncomfortable when they are teething, offer them a teething ring.
- If there are other symptoms like fever, diarrhoea or rashes seek medical attention.





Dental Information Fact Sheets

Tooth Decay

What is tooth decay?

Tooth decay starts as small white spots that grow to large holes over a period of time. If tooth decay is not treated it may lead to infection, pain and swelling and eventually to tooth loss.

How do teeth decay?

Germs (bacteria) in your mouth grow on teeth every day. They form a sticky layer over the teeth called dental plaque. The bacteria in plaque use sugars in the things we drink and eat, and make acids. The acid attacks the tooth's outer layers (enamel and dentine) and dissolves them away. If acid continues to attack, then a hole will appear in the tooth's outer layer. This is called tooth decay. Tooth decay may be painful or you may not even know it is there. Saliva (spit) neutralises the acid in plaque. If the plaque is brushed off and saliva surrounds the tooth, the enamel surface can harden again. Fluoride helps the enamel to be repaired.¹¹

What causes tooth decay?

- Not brushing teeth everyday with fluoride toothpaste.
- Sugary food and drinks consumed frequently throughout the day.

What are some foods that can cause tooth decay?

Sugary and sticky foods like lollies, biscuits, cakes, chocolate. Any food that sticks to tooth surfaces and dissolves slowly increases the risk of tooth decay.

What are some drinks that can cause tooth decay?

Soft drink, juice, cordial, sports drinks, sweetened tea or coffee, flavoured milk. The risk of tooth decay increases if the sugary drinks are sipped slowly, or when they are swished and swilled before swallowing.

How can you prevent tooth decay?

- Eat healthy food and snacks.
- Limit sugary food and drinks.
- Drink tap water throughout the day.
- Brush your teeth morning and night with fluoride toothpaste.
- Have regular dental check-ups.

11. <http://www.cyh.com>



Dental Information Fact Sheets

Tooth Decay in Young Children

Tooth decay in young children is a serious dental condition that can occur as soon as the first tooth comes through the gum. It begins as white marks or lines that progressively become larger, turning yellow or brown. It can be a devastating condition that often requires hospitalisation and dental treatment under general anaesthesia.

What causes tooth decay in young children?

- **'Comfort sucking'** on a bottle with something sweet in it. For example:
 - putting your baby to bed with a bottle with something sweet in it like juice, milk or formula, soft drink or cordial
 - allowing your child to suck on a bottle for a long time with something sweet in it.



- **Eating** lots of sugary and sticky foods like lollies, biscuits, cakes, chocolate, muesli bars, ice cream. These are 'sometimes' foods and should be kept for special occasions like birthday parties. Any food that sticks to teeth increases the risk of tooth decay.
- **Not brushing** teeth every day with fluoride toothpaste, once they are 18 months old.

How can you prevent tooth decay?

- Breast feed your baby and limit night time on-demand feeding after 6 months.
- Put your baby to bed **without** a bottle.
- Only put breast milk or infant formula in feeding bottles and remove the bottle once your child has finished feeding.
- Start brushing when your baby gets his first tooth - no toothpaste until 18 months old.
- Introduce a cup from 6 months of age.
- Wean children from the bottle at around 12 months.
- Provide healthy food and snacks ('everyday' food).
- Encourage water in-between meals. Tap water contains fluoride, which helps protect their teeth.
- Lift the lip to check for tooth decay.
- Take your child to a dental professional by the end of their 2nd year.





Dental Information Fact Sheets

Tooth Brushing

When should you start brushing teeth?

- As soon as the first teeth appear, at around 6 months, they should be cleaned using a child-sized soft toothbrush, but not with toothpaste.
- The easiest way to brush infant's teeth is to sit, or lay, the child on your lap, support her head, and clean teeth gently.
- For an older child stand or kneel behind the child in front of the sink or mirror, support her head and look directly into the mouth.



When should you start using toothpaste?

- From around 18 months of age teeth should be cleaned twice a day with a small pea-sized amount of low fluoride (baby) toothpaste, and a child sized soft toothbrush.



- Children should spit out, but not swallow and not rinse.
- Toothpaste may be introduced earlier based on the advice of a dental professional.
- Toothpaste should always be used under the supervision of an adult.
- Children should have their teeth brushed by an adult up until eight years of age.

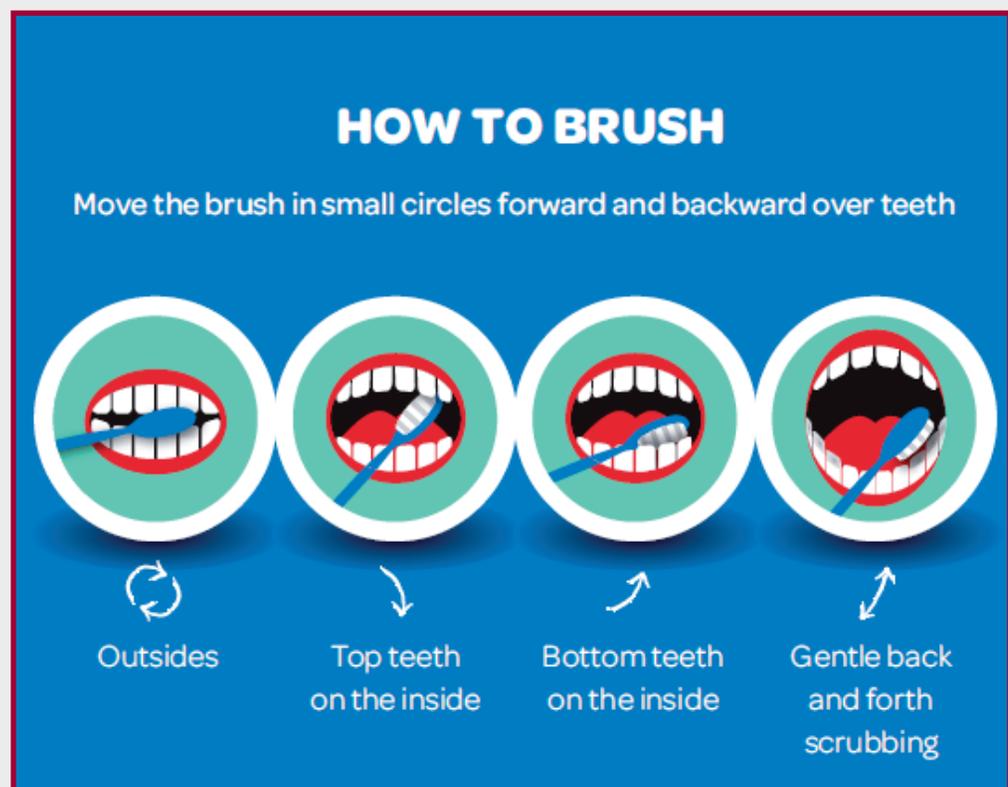
Why should you keep your own teeth and gums healthy?

- Children are not born with tooth-decay causing bacteria: this bacteria can pass over to a baby's mouth on dummies, bottles and spoons.
- Adults are advised to keep their own teeth and gums healthy through regular brushing with fluoride toothpaste.



Dental Information Fact Sheets

Tooth Brushing Technique



Artwork by Mandarin Creative Solutions P/L

Outsides

Brush using a circular motion.

Start on one side and go all the way to the other side.

Top teeth on the inside

Brush every tooth making sure you clean down to the gums.

Bottom teeth on the inside

Brush every tooth making sure you clean down to the gums.

Chewing surfaces

Gently scrub the chewing surfaces of the top and bottom teeth. Start on one side and go all the way to the other side.



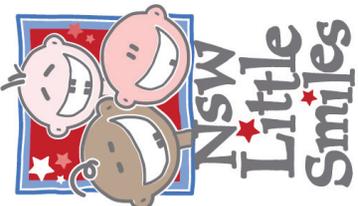
Dental Information Fact Sheets

Tooth Brushing Chart

A tooth brushing chart can help to remind children to brush their teeth morning and night. Children under 8 years should have their teeth brushed by an adult.

TOOTH BRUSHING CHART

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	☀	☾	☀	☾	☀	☾	☀	☾	☀	☾	☀	☾	☀	☾



Eat Well
Give healthy snacks during the day.

Drink Well
Give tap water between meals.

Clean Well
Help my child to brush their teeth morning and night.

Stay Well
Have a dental check-up every year.

*Adopted from SWAHS' ToothSmart Chart



Dental Information Fact Sheets

Dental Checks

What is 'Lift the Lip'?

- 'Lifting the lip' is a technique used to regularly check for signs of tooth decay in a child.
- It is simply lifting back a toddler's lip so any potential problems can be seen.

When should I lift the lip?

- Mouth checks are recommended during child health checks with a health care professional at 6-8 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 2, 3 and 4 years of age.
- Parents/carers should start checking their child's teeth as soon as they appear at about 6 months.
- If you notice any dark or white spots you should take your child for a check up with a dental professional.



First Dental Visit

When should my child have their first dental visit?

- All children should have their teeth checked at all child health visits.
- All children should have a dental assessment by a dental professional by the end of their 2nd year.





Dental Information Fact Sheets

Thumb Sucking and Dummies

Can thumb sucking or using a dummy damage my child's teeth?

- Thumb sucking or the use of a dummy by a baby is usually not cause for concern before permanent teeth appear.
- If the habit persists after the permanent teeth start to appear the thumb or dummy might force the teeth and jaw out of alignment. This may need correction by a dental specialist.

Stop dummy or thumb sucking before the permanent teeth come through.

What should I avoid with a dummy?

Don't dip dummies in sugary substances like honey, jam or condensed milk. They can cause tooth decay.



How do I keep a dummy clean?

- Dummies are frequently dropped so always keep a spare.
- Before using the dummy again place it in a sterilizing solution to kill bacteria or wash under running water.
- Cleaning the dummy by putting it in your mouth **will transfer bacteria from you to the child.**
- Children should **never** share dummies.





Dental Information Fact Sheets

Messages for a Healthy Mouth

NSW Health has developed 5 easy to remember messages for a healthy mouth for your preschool child:

Eat Well



- Provide healthy snacks like fresh fruit, cheese, vegetable sticks, wholegrain sandwiches and soups ('everyday' foods).
- Limit sugary ('sometimes') foods like lollies, biscuits, cakes, chocolate, muesli bars, ice cream.
- Sticky, sweet foods, such as honey, on a baby's dummy can cause tooth decay.

Drink Well



- Breast feed your baby.
- Put your baby to bed without a bottle.
- Only put breast milk or infant formula in feeding bottles and take the bottle away once your child has finished feeding.
- Limit sugary drinks like soft drink, juice, cordial, flavoured milk. Eating fruit is preferable to drinking fruit juice.
- Encourage children to drink tap water from an early age, especially in-between meals (boil water for children under 12 months). Tap water contains fluoride, which helps protect our teeth.
- Introduce a cup from 6 months of age.
- Wean children from the bottle at around 12 months.

Clean Well



- Start cleaning your baby's teeth as soon as they appear, at around 6 months, using a child-sized, soft toothbrush, but not with toothpaste.
- From around 18 months of age clean your toddler's teeth twice a day with a small pea-sized amount of low fluoride (baby) toothpaste, and a child sized soft toothbrush. They should spit out, but not swallow and not rinse. Toothpaste may be introduced earlier based on the advice of a dental professional.
- Brush your child's teeth until they are 8 years old.

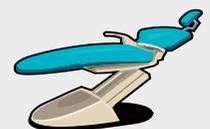
Play Well



- Supervise your child when they are playing.
- Children should wear a helmet when riding a bike.

Stay Well

- Lift the lip to check your child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears at about 6 months.
- Have your child's teeth checked at all child health visits.
- Take your child to a dental professional by the end of their 2nd year.
- Keep your own teeth and gums clean and healthy.





Dental Information Fact Sheets

Tips for Healthy Mini Meals & Snacks

It is important to establish healthy eating habits at an early age so you set your child up for lifelong healthy habits. Young children need about 5 or 6 small or 'mini' nutritious meals a day.

Mini Meal Ideas

- Baked beans
- Vegetable soup
- Left over pasta or rice
- Corn on the cob
- Hard boiled egg
- Grilled cheese on toast
- Homemade pizza on pita bread
- Jaffles
- Raw vegetables cut into sticks
- Fresh fruit cut into child-size pieces

Sandwich Suggestions

- Cheese and Vegemite
- Egg and lettuce
- Chicken and chopped celery
- Apple and cream cheese
- Chicken and avocado
- Cheese and tomato
- Tuna and tomato
- Chicken, tomato and lettuce



- **Children like variety** so instead of always using plain sliced bread, try using rolls, bagels, muffins, pita and lavish bread.
- **It's a good idea** to make sure your child sits down when they eat rather than letting them play while they are snacking on food and drink. If they run around sipping on a juice (like a popper) while they play they will have sugar in their mouth for a long time and this can cause tooth decay.
- **If you have a strong history of allergy**, avoid eggs, nuts, shellfish and gluten.



Dental Information Fact Sheets

Healthy Dinner Ideas

Children need a healthy, balanced meal for dinner. It should include:

- **Protein** – such as beef, chicken, lamb, fish, egg, legumes (beans, chickpeas, peas)
- **Vegetables** – use 2-3 types of vegetables and a variety of colours.
- **Carbohydrates** – such as pasta, rice, noodles or bread.

Try these great healthy combo dinners

- Chicken and vegetable stir-fry with rice
- Spaghetti Bolognese with mince and grated veggies
- A muffin with baked beans and salad
- Baked fish with mashed potato and pumpkin

Tip

Give your child his dinner early (about 4pm) if he gets too tired to eat later.

Then give him a small **healthy** snack later at the usual dinner time (about 7pm) if he is still hungry.





Dental Information Fact Sheets

Good Oral Health during Pregnancy

- Your baby's teeth start to develop around the 6th week of your pregnancy.
- Children are not born with tooth-decay causing bacteria.
- Bacteria can pass over to a baby's mouth on dummies, bottles and spoons.
- If you have poor dental health your baby is more likely to have dental problems.
- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, morning and night. If you have morning sickness DO NOT brush your teeth straight after vomiting - rinse your mouth with water and wipe a smear of toothpaste over your teeth.
- Avoid caffeine, soft drink, sports drinks, smoking and alcohol.
- Visit a dental professional either before or soon after you become pregnant so any problems can be treated immediately. Be sure to tell your dentist you are pregnant.

Healthy food choices during pregnancy

- Healthy food choices include vegetables, fresh fruit, bread and cereals, and low fat dairy foods like yoghurt.
- Milk, cheese, soy drink, salmon, almonds, broccoli and baked beans are good sources of calcium.

Keeping your teeth and gums healthy during pregnancy

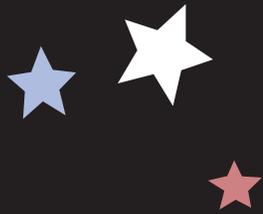
- Eat healthy foods, especially those high in calcium for proper development of your baby's teeth and bones.
- Drink tap water every day.





Glossary of Terms

Cavity	A hole or weak spot in the tooth surface caused by decay.
Child Health Checks	Regular monitoring of a child's growth and development by a health professional.
Child Health Professional	Any general health professional who works with children, including General Practitioners; Paediatricians, Child & Family Health Nurses, Aboriginal Health Workers, Family First Officers, Midwives, others as identified.
Dental Professional	Any dental professional, including General Dentists, Paediatric Dentists, Dental Therapists, Oral Health Therapists, Hygienists.
Dental Caries	The medical term for tooth decay.
Dentine	The middle layer of a tooth, which makes up most of the tooth's mass.
Dentition	The development of teeth and their arrangement in the mouth.
Early Childhood Caries (ECC)	Early Childhood Caries. A transmissible bacterial disease that affects the baby teeth of preschool aged children. Previously may have been called "baby bottle decay" or "nursing caries".
Enamel	The hard, outermost surface of a tooth.
Fluoride	The tasteless soluble form of the natural element fluorine that is used in fluoridated water, fluoride toothpastes, and fluoride products applied directly to teeth to prevent decay.
Gingiva (plural, gingivae)	Gum tissue.
Gingivitis	Inflammation of the gingivae.
Gluten	Any of the proteins found in cereal grains, especially wheat, rye, barley, and possibly oats that cause digestive disorders, such as celiac disease.
Gums	See gingiva.
Infection	The successful invasion of the body's tissues by pathogenic organisms. A person may have an infection but may not necessarily be infectious.
Plaque	A thin, sticky, colourless film of bacteria that forms on teeth. Plaque makes the acids that cause tooth decay.
Prevalence	The total number of cases of a disease in a given population at a specific time.
Saline	Consisting of or containing salt.



Appendixes

Appendix A: Sample form for parents

Date: _____

To the parent/guardian of _____

We have noticed that _____ may have some problems with his/her teeth.

You can contact your own private dentist or your free local public dental clinic.

If you choose the public dental clinic, please contact the Dental Clinic Call Centre ticked below.

Public Dental Health Call Centre	Phone No.	✓
Greater Southern	1800 450 046	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greater Western	1300 552 626	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1300 552 208	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hunter New England	1300 651 625	<input type="checkbox"/>
North Coast	1300 651 625	<input type="checkbox"/>
Northern Sydney Central Coast	1300 789 404	<input type="checkbox"/>
South Eastern Sydney Illawarra	1300 369 651	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1300 134 226	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sydney South West	02 9293 3333	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sydney West	02 9845 6766	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1300 739 949	<input type="checkbox"/>

- When you call you will need to have your Medicare Card on hand and you will be asked some questions about your child and their dental health.
- Depending on your child's needs, they will either be given an appointment straight away or placed on a waiting list.

NB: If your child is placed on a waiting list and gets a toothache before the dental appointment time, please contact the Dental Call Centre **IMMEDIATELY**.

Director Childcare Centre _____



Appendixes

Appendix B: Order Form for Resources

Better Health Centre ORDER FORM

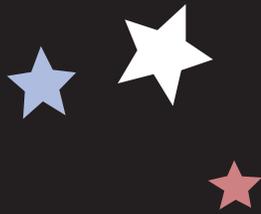
Description	Maximum Order	Quantity
Brush my Teeth poster	5	
Drink Well with a Training Cup - Poster (A4 size)	5	
Drink Well with a Training Cup - poster (A3 size)	5	
Early Childhood Oral Health Guidelines (A4 book) 2nd edition	5	
Fluoride – Smile it's Natural Brochure (DL size)	200	
Healthy Mouths for Kids under 5 - (DL brochure)	200	
Healthy Mouths for Kids under 5 – parent presentation with voiceover (DVD)	5	
Lift the Lip brochure/magnet (DL size)	200	
Lift the Lip - Poster (A4 size)	5	
Lift the Lip - Poster (A2 size)	5	
NSW Messages for a Healthy Mouth - Adults (DL brochure) Brown	200	
NSW Messages for a Healthy Mouth - Children (DL brochure) Red	200	
NSW Messages for a Healthy Mouth Guidelines (A4 booklet)	5	
NSW Messages for a Healthy Mouth Poster (A2 size)	5	
NSW Messages for a Healthy Mouth - Set of 5 Aboriginal Posters (A3 size)	5	
Public Dental Services Information Brochure (DL size)	200	
See my Smile brochure/magnet (DL size) – Aboriginal friendly version of Lift the Lip brochure	200	
Teach Your Baby to Drink from a Cup Brochure (DL size)	200	

ORDER DETAILS:

Organisation:			
Mailing Address:			
Suburb:		Post Code:	
Attention:		Telephone:	

SEND ORDER FORM REQUEST TO:

Better Health Centre	Telephone:	02 9887 5450
Macquarie Hospital	Fax:	02 9887 5452
Area Supply Store 2	Email:	bhc@nscchahs.health.nsw.gov.au
Badajoz Road, North Ryde 2113	Web:	www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs



Appendixes

Appendix C: Websites and Contact Details

Australian Department of Health and Ageing – Healthy Kids Check	http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Healthy_Kids_Check
Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW	http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/cohs
Go for 2&5® - an Australian government initiative	http://www.gofor2and5.com.au
Kidsafe NSW	http://www.kidsafensw.org
National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc (NCAC)	http://www.ncac.gov.au/
NSW Department of Health - Healthy Kids	http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service	http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au
Queensland Health Oral Health Services	http://www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth
Victoria Health Oral Health Services	http://www.dhsv.org.au

Australian Dental Association (NSW)	http://www.adansw.com.au Fluoride and water fluoridation http://www.fluoridenow.com.au
Colgate: Bright Smiles Bright Futures Preschool Program (free)	1800 075 685
Colgate Fundraiser: Healthy fundraiser (toothbrush & toothpaste kits)	http://www.colgate.com.au/app/Colgate/AU/HomePage.cvsp
Colgate Kids World: Games & Activities	http://www.colgate.com/app/Kids-World/US/HomePage.cvsp
Dental Outlook Publications	http://www.dentaloutlook.com.au
Educational Experience	http://www.edex.com.au/site/index.cfm
Henry Schein Halas Dental	http://www.henryschein.com.au
Oral B	http://www.oralb.com.au



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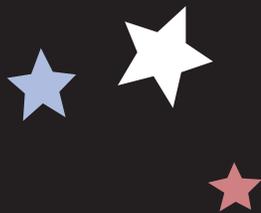
Appendix C: Websites and Contact Details

Public Dental Clinics

Area Health Service	Sector	Phone No.
Greater Southern		1800 450 046
Greater Western	Far West & Macquarie Mid West	1300 552 626 1300 552 208
Hunter New England		1300 651 625
North Coast		1300 651 625
Northern Sydney Central Coast		1300 789 404
South Eastern Sydney Illawarra	Illawarra South East Sydney	1300 369 651 1300 134 226
Sydney South West		02 9293 3333
Sydney West	Westmead Hospital Eastern/Western cluster	02 9845 6766 1300 739 949

Private Dentists

Organisation	Contact Details
Australian Dental Association, NSW Branch	02 8436 9900 www.adansw.com.au
Paediatric & Family Dentists	www.yellowpages.com.au



Appendixes

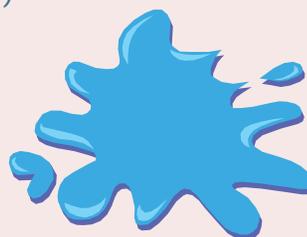
Appendix D: Lyrics for Dental Songs

The following dental songs were produced for North Coast Area Health Service, Strong Smiles Program, at Mana Studios, Huonbrook, NSW. Music produced and played by Dave Bain. Lyrics developed and sung by Laurel Rogers, Aboriginal Oral Health Promotion Officer, North Coast Area Health Service.

Water

(Sung similar to Polly put the kettle on.)

E
Water is so good for me.
B7 E
Good for me, good for me.
E
Water is so good for me.
E B7 E
Let me count the ways.



WORDS	ACTIONS
ONE → It helps me when I brush my teeth → So good for me so good for me It helps me when I brush my teeth → Water's good for me	Hold one finger up Pretend to brush your teeth Pretend to brush your teeth
TWO → It helps me when I rinse my mouth → So good for me so good for me It helps me when I rinse my mouth → Water's good for me.	Hold two fingers up Pretend to rinse out mouth & spit in sink Pretend to rinse out mouth & spit in sink
THREE → When I'm hot I drink it down → So good for me so good for me When I'm hot I drink it down → Water's good for me.	Hold three fingers up Pretend to drink a cup of water Pretend to drink a cup of water
FOUR → It helps me keep my body clean → So good for me so good for me It helps me keep my body clean → Water's good for me.	Hold four fingers up Pretend to wash arms and legs Pretend to wash arms and legs
FIVE → Water helps me think and grow → So good for me so good for me → Water helps me think and grow → Water's good for me. →	Hold five fingers up Point finger to brain and then put hand up in air showing growth Point finger to brain and then put hand up in air showing growth

Speak this line to children: "Do you know of other ways that water helps us?"



Appendixes

Appendix D: Lyrics for Dental Songs

Eat Together, Play Together Song

C F
 Eat together Play together
 G7 C
 But don't share your toothbrush around
 C F
 You can Eat together Play together
 But don't share your toothbrush around

WORDS	ACTIONS
Eat together →	Pretend to Eat
Play together →	Palms facing forward make circular motions
But don't share your toothbrush around	Shake your pointing finger
You can Eat together →	Pretend to Eat
Play together →	Palms facing forward make circular motions
But don't share your toothbrush around →	Shake your pointing finger
Cause there are germs that can be found →	Keep shaking your pointing finger
If you share your toothbrush around →	Shake fist
So you can Eat together →	Pretend to Eat
Play together →	Palms facing forward make circular motions
But don't share your toothbrush around →	Shake your pointing finger



Appendixes

Appendix D: Lyrics for Dental Songs

Gum Song

A

Don't forget your gums when brushing your teeth

E

Cause gums need a working too

E

But... don't do it hard, just do it well

A

Cause gums need a working too

Round and round we go, and that's when we know

That our mouth's healthy too

But... don't do it hard, just do it well

Cause gums need a working too

Don't forget your gums when brushing your teeth

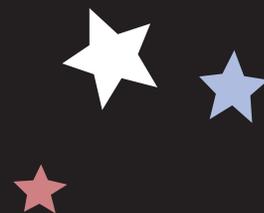
Cause gums need a working too

But... don't do it hard, just do it well

Cause gums need a working too



WORDS	ACTIONS
Don't forget your gums when brushing your teeth →	Pretending to brush your teeth in the air in a circular motion
Cause gums needs working too →	Keep pretending to brush
But... don't do it hard, just do it well	Pretend to brush in circles
Cause gums need working too	Then brush round and round on both sides
Round and round we go,	
and that's when we know →	Keep brushing
That our gums are healthy too →	Pretend to brush in circles
But... don't do it hard, just do it well →	
Cause gums need working too	
Don't forget your gums when brushing your teeth →	Pretending to brush your teeth in the air in a circular motion.
Cause gums need working too	Keep pretending to brush
But... don't do it hard, just do it well	
Cause gums need working too	



Appendixes

Appendix D: Lyrics for Dental Songs

Swig, Swish, Swallow is a song from Tiddalick's Tale©. Words & music by Angela Curran 2003, compiled by Joel Wenitong. Tiddalick's Tale© was collaboratively developed by Hunter New England Area Health Service and Awabakal Medical Service.

Swig, Swish, Swallow Song

**Tiddalick knows how to keep his mouth clean.
It's the funniest dance that you have ever seen.
You swig up the water and swish it all around
and swallow it down then jump up off the ground.**

Swig Swish and Swallow Swig Swish and Swallow

**You swig up the water and swish it all around
and swallow it down then jump up off the ground.**

Encourage the children to crouch down
like Tiddalick the frog
in preparation for singing the song.



Start singing song with actions:

Tiddalick knows how to keep his mouth clean
(make the shape of a smile with both hands)
It's the funniest dance that you have ever seen
(swing arms in a quick marching mode beside body)

You swig up the water

(mimic actions of drinking out of a bottle)

and swish it all around

(shake head from side to side)

and swallow it down

(move both hands downwards from above head, twinkling fingers)

and jump up off the ground

(jump like a frog)

Swig, Swish and Swallow

1. Mimic actions of drinking out of a bottle
2. Shake head from side to side
3. Move both hands downwards from above head, twinkling fingers

Swig, Swish and Swallow

1. Mimic actions of drinking out of a bottle
2. Shake head from side to side
3. Move both hands downwards from above head, twinkling fingers

* Repeat the song and actions once more.

