

Dental Health Policy

BELLA GRACE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

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.

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 Queensland Health (Oral Health Unit).

Strategies and practices

- The oral health message is promoted amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, verbal communication, parent-educator meetings, and dental health educational materials such as Happy Teeth (Queensland Health), and the celebration of Dental Awareness Month.
- Educators are provided with professional development opportunities in oral health and receive resources, such as the Happy Teeth Resource Kit, and updates from the Oral Health Unit (Queensland).
- At the Brightwater School Kindergarten, Parents are asked to provide healthy foods in their children's lunchboxes, particularly fruit and vegetables for morning and afternoon tea. Foods high in sugar in children's lunchboxes are returned home, and educators may suggest alternatives.
- Children are encouraged to drink water after eating.
- 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. When appropriate to children's interest and the program, educators 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.
- 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.
- Mothers are encouraged and supported to breastfeed.
- Only milk or water is used in baby bottles.

Dental Health Policy

- 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.

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

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| Regs | 77 | Health, hygiene and safe food practices |
| QA | 2.1.2 | Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented |
| | 2.1.3 | Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child |

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011nhh
- Queensland Health. *Happy Teeth Resource Kit*.
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth/promo_programs/happy_teeth.asp accessed 24 December 2017

Further reading and useful websites

- Centre for Community Child Health – <http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/> accessed 24 December 2017
- Queensland Health. (2016). *Prevention and Promotion Programs and Resources*.
http://health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth/promo_programs/ accessed 24 December 2017
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au> accessed 24 December 2017
- 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 accessed 24 December 2017

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

REVIEW DETAILS:

| Review Date | Details of Changes |
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| January 2018 | Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 Feb 2018 |
| April 2018 | Reviewed. Minor wording changes. |
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