



Southampton's Healthy Early years

Healthy Mouths Policy Template

A healthy mouth is important to general health. As an early year setting, providing care to children, it is good opportunity to promote and protect the oral health of children in your care as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Strategic Framework (EYFS).

This template aims to provide guidance for settings on what to include in their Health Mouth policy, to make it as strong as possible, and to cover all required aspects needed to submit the award. This template sets out a number of headings, with questions/ideas under each heading. You do not have to use every heading word for word, but ensuring you cover all sections in this template will help you towards achieving the Award. This template can be used if you are working towards your silver submission.

Background Information

- Basic information about your setting, e.g. location, whether you offer full day care, number of children registered, ages of children registered, details of supervised brushing policy prior to commencement of silver award.
- Date the current policy was agreed
- Date the current policy will be reviewed
- Name of the person responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented, monitored and evaluated (Healthy Mouth Lead/Champion)
- Links to other curriculum requirements and policies e.g. health and safety and how it links to the EYFS framework

Policy Development

Consider the following:

- Who was consulted in order to develop your policy? E.g. children parents, staff
- How was this done? E.g. parent surveys, discussion, meetings
- Work in partnership with parents

Rationale

- Why is this policy important?
- e.g. the importance of establishing good mouth health care habits early in life, reducing tooth decay and pain and discomfort in children, promoting self- development, contributing towards gaining the Health Early Years Award

- Support families to find a dentist for regular and emergency care

Aim

What is your overall Healthy Mouth aim? E.g. implementing supervised tooth brushing, ensuring all parents are informed of the benefits of good oral health in their children, to improve oral health and therefore general health of children in your care, meeting EYFS statutory requirements

When & who the policy applies to

- Who does the policy apply to? Consider how it applies to staff, parents/ carers, children, visitors, volunteers, and the wider community linked to the settings.
- When does it apply? Consider how it applies to the different age groups in your care, and those not in full- time care.
- Consider if there are any cultural or religious barriers, or gaining consent from parents and those not compliant

Objectives

What specific things do you want to achieve? What are your setting's particular priorities around mouth health? Some examples could include:

- ✓ Ensuring all children partake in supervised tooth brushing in your setting
- ✓ Using age- appropriate toothbrushes and toothpaste
- ✓ Being confident in recognising and managing common oral health-related problems e.g. dental emergency, toothache, or tooth decay
- ✓ Sign posting families to local NHS dentists for regular care
- ✓ Greater engagement with parents regarding their children's' oral health and well-being
- ✓ Meeting the requirements as set out in the EYFS through mouth health (physical, personal, and social development)

Your setting's commitment

What are your setting's roles and responsibilities in promoting good mouth health? This should include sections on:

A) Identifying a Healthy Mouth Lead (HML)

The HML is an advocate for good mouth health in the Early Years Setting who would have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Engaging with children, parents, and staff by promoting the importance of a balanced diet and good mouth health both at the setting and at home
- Engaging with parents before and after implementation of the policy and answering any questions/ concerns they may have.

- Highlighting the importance of regular visits with the dentist as soon as the first tooth appears
- Works towards integrating oral health on new-starter forms by asking if child has a dentist when first registering
- Recognising and appropriately treating mouth problems which may present in the early years setting e.g. a child knocking out a tooth or toothache
- Leading supervised tooth- brushing within the setting or training those involved
- Hosting a oral health promotion stall on an open evening/summer fete emphasising the importance of a healthy diet and good oral health in children
- Work on developing from the silver award to the gold award

B) Implementing Supervised Tooth-brushing in early years setting

Brushing each day at school has been shown to reduce tooth decay and beneficial in establishing good mouth health behaviour.

After attending the training event the HML can go onto to establish supervised brushing by becoming familiar with the ‘Supervised Tooth brushing Handbook’

The following points are there as a guide to help you to establish safe and effective tooth-brushing in your setting.

1/ Organisation of supervised brushing

- Who should be the supervised brushing lead? Perhaps the HML
- Consider the safety and hygiene of your designated area (see Supervised Tooth Brushing Handbook)
- How will you gain support and consent from parents and guardians
- How and when brushes will be cleaned, stored, and replaced
- What frequency of cleaning checks will be adopted to ensure hygiene requirements are met and who is responsible for the check?

2/ Ensuring an effective programme

- Consider a suitable time for brushing and which staff members will be tooth-brushing supervisors.
- Use and dispense –appropriate fluoridated toothpaste during supervised brushing sessions:
 - o What amounts of toothpaste are appropriate for each age group in the setting?
 - o How will you make the sessions fun whilst being safe?
 - o Who provides toothbrushes and toothpaste?

3/ Hygiene and Safety

- What storage systems will you have to prevent cross- contamination?
- How will you make toothbrushes and their storage individually identifiable?

The commitment you require from parents/families

What commitment do you require from parents sending their children to your setting around implementing your Healthy Mouth policy and achieving your overall aim? E.g.

- Asking parent to highlight any special needs to the setting as soon as possible e.g. if the child does not like flavoured toothpaste
- Complete an enrolment form to consent to supervised toothbrushing programme
- Being a positive role model to children at home, by ensuring children brush twice daily at home in addition to brushing at the setting

Communication and dissemination plan

How will your policy be communicated to staff, children, and their families e.g. website, newsletters, agenda item at staff meetings, new staff induction?

Evaluation & Review

How do you evaluate and review what you are doing within your setting around oral health for children? Consider how often you do the following:

- Gather feedback from staff, parents/ carers, and children on the programme to seek areas for improvement
- Review the latest guidance on supervised tooth-brushing
- Review your Healthy Mouth Policy

Name of Setting: _____

Name and Signature of Manger: _____

Date: _____