Parent’s Checklist for Good Dental Health Practices in Child Care

From: Healthy Kids, Healthy Care: Dental Health, www.healthykids.us

Do you see the following practices carried out?

✔ checklist

**Foods**
- Children are fed nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products (milk, cheese and yogurt) instead of foods high in sugar.
- Drinking water is readily available throughout the day.
- Children are served juice in a cup (100% fruit juice or reconstituted juice). Juice is limited to 4 to 6 oz. a day.

**Brushing**
- Children brush their teeth with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste after each meal. Caregivers help the younger children with brushing.
- Children rinse out their mouths with water when brushing is not possible.

**Preventing Tooth Decay**
- The caregiver always holds the infant while giving the infant a bottle.
- Infants are never put to sleep with bottles or sippy cups in their cribs and bottles are not “propped” in their mouths.
- Infants are only fed a bottle during mealtimes.
- Infants are taught to drink from a cup when they can sit up without support.
- Infants’ teeth are brushed as soon as the first tooth erupts (usually around age 6 to 10 months).

**Safety Issues**
- Each child has his/her own toothbrush, labeled and the size appropriate to the child’s age. No sharing or borrowing of toothbrushes is allowed.
- Toothbrushes are stored in a manner that prevents cross contamination.
- Toddlers do not carry bottles or sippy cups around with them. This prevents injury to mouth, ear infections, and dental cavities.
- Each child has his/her own toothpaste tube. If the toothpaste is dispensed from one large tube for all children, then the toothpaste is given out on a clean piece of paper.
- Caregivers wash their hands and wear gloves when helping children to brush their teeth.

**If a Dental Emergency Occurs At Child Care**
- The caregiver has a plan to handle dental related problems/emergencies such as:
  - Toothaches
  - Cut or bitten tongue, lip, or cheek
  - Broken tooth, broken jaw
  - Persistent bleeding after a primary (baby) tooth falls out.
- The caregiver has a plan for transporting a child with a dental emergency to the nearest source of emergency dental care.
- The caregiver has current contact information on each child’s dentist.
How you as a parent can help your caregiver promote good dental health:

- Always put your baby to sleep without a bottle or sippy cup – not even water. Bottle feeding in bed is a hard habit to break.
- Teach your baby to drink from a cup when they can sit up without support.
- Include dental information on health records supplied to the caregiver.
- Give your caregiver contact information for your child’s dentist in case of emergency. See below for help finding a dentist for your child.
- Give consent to your dentist to talk with your caregiver when necessary.
- Supply your caregiver with appropriate sized toothbrushes for your child.
- Ask your child’s dentist if s/he would be willing to speak at a parents’ meeting about the importance of good dental health.

How to Find a Dentist

American Dental Association – Find a Dentist  http://www.ada.org/public/directory/index.asp
Where to Find Low Cost Dental Care (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research)  http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/HealthInformation/FindingDentalCare.htm

Additional Materials/Organizations

American Academy of Pediatrics  http://www.aap.org
Bright Futures in Practice: Oral Health  http://www.mchoralhealth.org/pocketguide
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research Resources for Kids and Teachers  http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/HealthInformation/KidsAndTeachers.htm


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Your Child’s Dental Health Provider

Additional copies may be downloaded from http://nrc.uchsc.edu/dentalchecklist.pdf
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