

EARLY YEARS: MAKING SUPERVISED TOOTHBRUSHING PROGRAMMES WORK

Tooth decay in children causes pain and infection and **reduces attendance** at nursery and school

Improving children's oral health is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework

Daily supervised toothbrushing with a fluoride toothpaste in early years settings is effective at reducing tooth decay, especially in children at greatest risk

Running supervised toothbrushing programmes (STPs) can be challenging for early years settings, but many of these challenges can be overcome

The BRUSH research project looked at STPs in England in [2022](#), [2024](#) and [2025](#), and investigated the barriers and facilitators to their implementation

Check out our [online toolkit](#) which includes resources developed with nurseries and primary schools, to help make STPs easier to run

"I found it very informative and easy to navigate. The links to case studies and different local authority resources are very helpful, giving lots of additional background information. I think it is an excellent resource which can be used by a variety of providers."

– nursery manager
describing the BRUSH toolkit



The number and size of STPs in England has grown between 2022–25. More nurseries and schools now take part and more children are involved.



The government has announced new funding for a national STP for 3–5 year olds living in the most deprived areas in England.



Further expansion is coming as a result of the new funding. Early years settings have a vital role to play but need the **right support** and **resources**.

Early years settings taking part in STPs can be...

Good because it:



improves children's health and development



contributes to compliance with the statutory framework

Hard because of:



competing priorities

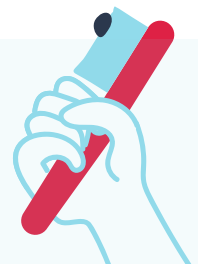


staff turnover



funding pressures

Early years settings running effective toothbrushing programmes say that partnership working with STP teams, council colleagues and engaging with parents and children are key factors in their success. They have learnt a lot from talking to other settings about how they make toothbrushing part of their daily routine.



The **BRUSH toolkit** includes resources, guides and sections for early years settings, parents and carers plus many activities for children supervisedtoothbrushing.com

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