

Top Tips for Early Years Settings

Oral health in the curriculum

Promoting oral health should not be approached as a separate activity. You can integrate oral health activities into the curriculum. Use learning activities that relate to curriculum targets whilst also delivering key oral health messages.



Make it fun!

Use creative fun ways to engage the children in the toothbrushing activity and change them around occasionally so they don't get bored. Here are some examples of fun activities you could try.

Have an Oral Health Champion

Having an oral health champion can aid in cascading information and training to the rest of the staff, keeping track of supplies as well as being the established point of contact with the provider.

Toothbrushing Supplies

Keep track of your supplies. Contact your provider when more stock is needed and give them sufficient notice (at least two weeks or as agreed upon with your provider).



Promote the scheme to parents

Most parents are grateful for the help supervised toothbrushing at their early years setting gives them. Daily toothbrushing with their peers teaches children toothbrushing skills and is another opportunity for the fluoride toothpaste to prevent tooth decay. It is important to emphasise that brushing in the setting is not a replacement for brushing at home. Provide the parents with or signpost them to resources that encourage home toothbrushing. In some areas, free toothbrushing packs will be available for children to take home to support home toothbrushing.

Here are some examples of how you can engage families and raise awareness of supervised toothbrushing.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Children with SEND often require additional support to participate in toothbrushing and the needs of each child will vary. It is important to involve parents and work with your Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCo) to understand the specific needs and preferences of each child. Below are some oral health resources that can be used, and adapted accordingly, to support children and their parents/carers. Find resources here.



Consider language and cultural barriers

Think about the families you work with. If there are language or cultural barriers to working with families, speak to the local oral health team about support they can provide. There are leaflets and forms available in different languages. Some parents may have concerns about toothpaste ingredients containing animal derivatives. Identifying these concerns and working with the local oral health team can help with improving participation rates.



Communication is key

The local oral health team are there to support you with whatever queries or concerns you have whether that's about following the local protocol, answering parents' questions or staffing problems that may risk the supervised toothbrushing happening every day. Please do contact your local oral health team.



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