

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start

Part: 1302 Program Operations

Subpart: D-Health Program Services

Section: 1302.43 Oral Health Practices

Subject: Dental Hygiene

Policy:

All Head Start/Early Head Start children will either have their mouth swabbed (less than one (1) year of age), their teeth brushed or will brush their teeth (under adult supervision) once a day during the Head Start/Early Head Start program day. If a pandemic arises during the school year tooth brushing will be discontinued until it is safe to resume. Dental information will be sent home to families and toothbrushes will be sent home every two months or as needed. This will be documented on the classroom toothbrush chart.

Procedure:

1. For infants under the age of one, staff must wash their hands, cover one finger with gauze and then gently wipe the infant's gums or use the infant brush to brush the infant's gums.
2. For children aged one to two, caregivers will brush toddler's teeth with a soft bristled toothbrush and a small smear of non-fluoride toothpaste. (If a toddler is unable to spit then only water will be used). For preschool aged children, a smear of toothpaste will be placed on the edge of a small cup. The child will use this and their toothbrush to clean their teeth. After brushing, the preschooler will then have a small amount of water to rinse any particles out of their mouth.
3. Staff will assist 3-4 children a day during toothbrushing time. A chart must be posted to make sure all children are assisted at least once during the week. Also, teachers will continue to implement good dental hygiene into their curriculum throughout the school year. Activities celebrating Dental Month will be incorporated into teacher's lesson plans.
4. Home Visitors will educate families on age-appropriate dental hygiene by providing toothbrushes to the child, opportunities to brush, and information on good oral hygiene. At socializations children will be encouraged to brush their teeth.
5. Toothbrushes will be labeled with each child's initials, first name and last initial or number.
6. Toothbrushes will be replaced routinely every two (2) months. If a child has a severe illness, such as chicken pox, flu, infections, etc., their toothbrush will also be replaced upon their return to school.

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7. Tooth brushing will be done at a designated sink. Only one child will be permitted to brush per sink. Adult supervision is required.
8. After lunch, Head Start children will brush with fluoride toothpaste one time during their day. Early Head Start children will have their mouths swabbed or brushed once during their day.
9. A chart will be kept in the brushing area reflecting the date toothbrushes were changed and the name of the staff that changed them.
10. Any changes in these procedures must be approved by the Health Advisory Committee.
11. Toothbrushes will be stored in a covered container with bristles not touching. The container will be stored out of children's reach.