

Hygiene – Tooth Brushing

Policy/Approach:

SOHS provides opportunities for healthy growth and development, including establishing daily routines for each child served. Children will have a daily health check, wash their hands at required times, and brush their teeth daily according to established procedures and with the guidance and support of trained staff. Staff will also follow Health and Safety Institute training and diapering and toileting procedures as needed for each child.

Head Start Program Performance Standards:

1302.43 – Oral health practices

Our procedures are subject to adjustment based on Public Health needs or advisory from either our local, state or federal governing bodies. Any temporary modifications to procedures in this event will be documented and shared with staff.

Procedure:

- People (staff, adult, child helper, parent/guardian, volunteer, etc.) assisting with tooth brushing will wash their hands before helping.
- Each child aged one and over have their own toothbrush labeled with their name.
- Dispense smears of toothpaste onto a paper plate, cup, wax paper, etc., and then apply to each toothbrush by wiping each toothbrush through a separate smear. This will prevent a child's toothbrush from using toothpaste that was touched by another child's brush.
- Toothbrushes are rinsed after each use and stored in a designated place in such a way as not to touch one another and out of the reach of children. Allow each child to rinse their own toothbrush and place it into the holder. (Staff can do a rinse at the end of the activity if there are concerns that one toothbrush has touched another).
- Adults who are assisting the children will demonstrate how the children should brush their teeth. This can be done in a variety of ways, including adults brushing their own teeth using a dry toothbrush or modeling the proper motions of brushing teeth with a set of model teeth.
- Toothbrushes will be replaced quarterly, and as needed due to child's development, illnesses or becoming soiled/damaged; Health Services staff will send them to centers.

For Each Age Group:

Infants:

- At least once daily, adults clean the gums of infants under age 1.
- The adult washes their hands, then covers a finger with a gauze pad, soft cloth, or finger brush and gently wipes the infant's gums.

Children 1-2 years old:

- Once daily, after a meal, adults assist children to brush their teeth using the child's own toothbrush with a smear of toothpaste.
- Adults can assist children in rinsing their toothbrushes.

Children 2 and over:

- Once daily, after a meal, adults monitor children in brushing their teeth and assist as needed.
- Head Start children will rinse their own toothbrushes with guidance from staff to enhance their fine motor and other developmentally appropriate skills.

Toothbrush Guidance:

- 0 – first tooth = Finger Toothbrush
- First tooth – 23/24 months = Toofer
- 23/24 months – 5 years = Regular Toothbrush