Hygiene – Tooth Brushing

**POLICY/APPROACH:**

SOCFC 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 Medic First Aid training, and diapering and toileting procedures as needed for each child.

**PROCEDURE:**

- People (adult, child helper, parent, volunteer, etc.) assisting with tooth brushing will wash their hands before helping and will wear gloves when helping children with brushing, changing gloves as needed to prevent cross contamination between children.

- Each child age 1 and over has his or her own toothbrush labeled with his or her 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 so that they can air dry.

- If toothbrushes become contaminated in any way, by dropping on the floor, touching an unclean surface, or touching another child’s toothbrush it should be washed with soap and water by a staff person, rinsing thoroughly.

- 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; Health Services staff will send them to centers.

**HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:**

1302.43 – Oral health practices
For each age group:

**Infants:**

At least once daily, adults clean the gums of infants under age 1.

The adult washes his/her hands, then covers a finger with a gauze pad or soft cloth 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 toothbrush.

**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 so as to enhance their fine motor and other developmentally appropriate skills. Staff can assist in rinsing if needed, but children should be encouraged to complete this task.