

Oral health in early years

Promote and support good oral health at your nursery.

Learning aims

- Promote and support good oral health - the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in England has added the inclusion of promoting oral health to the health statutory requirement
- Raise awareness of the importance of keeping teeth clean and healthy
- Understand how what we eat and drink affects our teeth.



Resources

- Photos/magazines of healthy teeth and unhealthy teeth
- Range of real foods/drinks or packaging of a range of foods/drinks (some that are good for teeth and some that are not)
- Mirrors to look at their own teeth
- Toothbrushes/water and small world toys such as dinosaurs.

Activity outline

1. Start by talking to the children about the importance of healthy teeth and how to look after them, share photos/magazine cut-outs of healthy teeth and what happens when teeth are not looked after
2. Use mirrors so children can look at their own teeth
3. Encourage the children to sort out different food into groups of which are healthy and good for our teeth e.g. cheese and milk, and which are not good for our teeth e.g. sweets and fizzy drinks
4. Use the toothbrushes and water to help clean small world animals such as the dinosaurs. Roll them in glitter or playdough first and then talk about how hard it is to clean them, and to make sure you clean them to get all the bits off them just like we have to do with our own teeth
5. Talk to the children about what you are doing and together demonstrate the most effective way to brush, don't forget to set the timer too, to make sure you brush for the full two minutes
6. Take lots of photos (with permission)

Extending the activity

- Share books about the dentist/looking after your teeth and stories such as Peppa Pig's Trip to the Dentist and Alan's Big Scary Teeth
- Share and sing songs about tooth brushing such as the 'Tooth Brushing Song' by Blippi
- Talk about and engage in role-play about going to the dentist.

Special considerations

Consider any COVID-19 restrictions/policies (current guidelines for England are Supervised tooth brushing programmes may be re-established within settings using the dry brushing method. The wet brushing model is not recommended because it is considered more likely to risk droplet and contact transmission and offers no additional benefit to oral health over dry tooth brushing).