

# Tickton Pre-school and Play Pals,

## Oral Health Policy.

### Working in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS).

Quality and Consistency.

A Secure Foundation.

Partnership Working.

Equality of Opportunity.

Unique Child

Positive Partnerships

Enabling Environment

Learning and Developing

Promoting oral health in early years and at Tickton Pre-school is essential to protect young teeth and establish good habits. Oral hygiene is very important in achieving overall good oral health. This is also becoming a key aspect on which the EYFS (early years foundation stage) is focusing.

It is beneficial for us all to have a clear understanding of how to support children with oral health. It is said that 25% of children under the age of 5 experience tooth decay. This can be a result of one or more of the following reasons:

- Eating a poor diet.
- Brushing teeth less than twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Coming from a deprived background.

Dental decay is a serious problem in young people – and it is largely preventable. In 2017 in England, almost a quarter of five year olds had experienced tooth decay, having an average of 3 or 4 decayed teeth. Figures suggest that more than 105 children a day have their teeth removed in hospital due to tooth decay.

It is therefore important for us at Tickton Pre-school and Play Pals to support children with oral health, as their first experiences can have a great impact on the rest of their lives. By supporting children at Pre-school, we can teach them about their mouths, introduce them to good habits and normalise dental visits, helping to put them at ease and gain trust. By working in partnership with parents and local authorities we can successfully promote oral health.

#### **There are key points that we should remember to help prevent tooth decay:**

- Reduce the consumption of foods which have a high sugar content.
- Brush teeth twice a day.
- Children should visit the dentist as soon as their first tooth erupts and attend check-ups every 6 months thereafter.

### **There are three main themes in good dental health:**

- Keep sugary and acidic food and drinks to mealtimes
- Brush teeth at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste
- Visit the dentist regularly

### **How Tickton pre-school supports oral health in day-to-day practice.**

At Tickton pre-school we provide children with nutritional and healthy snacks and encourage families to provide healthy pack lunches - which limits sugary snacks. We ensure that children have access to fresh drinking water all day. We also provide children with milk at mealtimes. We support and encourage children to use open cups or free flow beakers as prolonged bottle use can cause tooth decay.

We share information with parents and carers via social media messages, newsletters, snacks and drinks posters, tips to help with teeth brushing and by sharing this policy. We can also provide 'brushing charts' that can be printed to support with twice daily brushing as requested. Around our setting you will find oral health displays and information which helps us promote good oral hygiene habits to the children and families within our care as well as with our practitioners.

As an early years provider it is important to us that the activities children engage in help to further extend their development in all areas of learning. Below we have outlined how our oral health related activities benefit our children across all seven areas of learning.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development.**

Children have the opportunity to build on their relationships by coming together to carry out activities. This could be during many activities such as dentist role play, sharing their experiences through circle time and other group activities. They will learn about feelings as they consider how visiting the dentist can make them feel. We carry out our oral health activities to help the children gain self-confidence when brushing their teeth.

### **Physical Development.**

Teaching the children health and self-care is a big part of our day-to-day practice. We teach children how to brush their teeth through discussions and through practice (brush bus). Practitioners will help children to gain an understanding that oral health is an important part of their daily hygiene routine. We also teach the children about healthy and unhealthy foods and provide food activities that allow them to taste healthy options.

### **Communication and Language.**

We encourage children to speak about their experiences when visiting the dentist, which is great for listening skills, understanding skills, and speaking skills. Children also enjoy asking each other questions and listening to what their friends have to say. Younger children learn

new words and begin to match words to objects with context, for example, toothbrush and toothpaste.

### **Literacy**

Children have the opportunity to enjoy occupational themed books that are both fiction and non-fiction. This gives the children the opportunity to gain an understanding of oral hygiene routines and some facts about teeth. Children can also listen to stories about taking a trip to the dentist which will help them understand what to expect as well as put their mind at ease. Some of the older children will also practice their writing skills as we encourage mark making in role play.

### **Mathematics**

Children enjoy using the set of large teeth to count how many teeth are in their mouths. This is quite a high number so they often need support with this, but it's still a great way for them to gain an awareness of number names, which they will often repeat. The children also learn how much toothpaste they need to use on their brush. We encourage the children to use the 2 minute sand timer when role playing or brushing the large set of teeth.

### **Understanding the World**

Children are encouraged to explore the role of both the dentist and the patient through their role play. We teach children what a toothbrush is and what it is used for. The children can also use technology to watch videos about the dentist as well as enjoy some interactive stories. Children at Tickton Pre-school are encouraged to share their experiences of trips to the dentist, which will often involve them talking about the people who are close to them (key workers).

### **Expressive Art and Design**

Children can role play dentist and patients, encouraging them to play alongside each other and to use their imaginations. We teach children new songs, one of which is about how to brush your teeth. The children also engage in lots of mark making activities relating to oral health and healthy eating and will enjoy exploring different textures as they do this.

### **Celebrations.**

We recognise that birthdays and festivals are a very special times for young children, and we want to ensure it is celebrated in an enjoyable, healthy and tooth friendly way. We do this by:

- Singing 'Happy Birthday' to the birthday child (whilst they hold the toy birthday cake]
- Letting the birthday child choose today's story/song/activity
- Perhaps displaying a photo of them on the birthday wall We ask parents/carers not to bring in any cake or unhealthy treats to celebrate birthdays.
- Healthy, tooth friendly treats are welcome, such as fresh fruit that the children do not often have, for example strawberries, blueberries, or kiwi fruit. Non-food items are also permitted, for example temporary tattoos, stickers, or small stationery items. Any

cake or unhealthy treats that are brought in will be sent home where parents can choose to give this to their child. We would encourage this to be as part of a meal.

- For any celebrations where we provide food or food-based activities in between meals, such as when celebrating Diwali, Christmas, Pancake Day, Easter, Eid, Chinese New Year for example; we will ensure that the food and drink will be tooth friendly i.e. fresh fruit/vegetables and savoury items, with milk or water to drink.

Eating habits are shaped when children are very young and can last a lifetime. Eating healthy food that is low in sugar helps to prevent tooth decay and also encourages good general health. Eating chopped fruit and vegetables does not cause tooth decay. Bread, breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese, natural yoghurt or fromage frais are all tooth friendly snacks. Dried fruit given as a snack (such as raisins) increases the risk of tooth decay. Water and milk are the best tooth-friendly drinks. Freshly prepared fruit juice and smoothies should be given only once a day and with a meal as they contain a high concentration of sugar.

### **Supervised toothbrushing with the children**

Tickton Pre-school and Play Pals runs a brush bus scheme every day. Our 'Brush Bus' scheme is implemented in line with:

[CCS-stbp-guidance-COVID-version.pdf \(dentalhealthcare.nhs.uk\)](https://www.dentalhealthcare.nhs.uk/CCS-stbp-guidance-COVID-version.pdf)

Children aged under 3 should use just a smear of toothpaste. Children aged 3 to 6 years of age should use a pea sized amount of toothpaste.

Staff members have completed training regarding oral hygiene.

### **Supporting information.**

Finding a Dentist If you are unsure of your local family dentist, you can use the NHS website to find your closest one: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Oral Health Foundation have a team of fully trained experts. You can contact them by visiting their website: <https://www.dentalhealth.org> Or calling them on +44(0) 1788 546 3

If you require any support or guidance with oral health at home, please do not hesitate to speak with the Nursery Manager who will try their best to support you and provide you with further information. Below we have also provided you with some useful links that will further support you with maintaining good oral health for your child.