

DENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Early childhood is an important time for developing good dental hygiene practices. From the time a baby starts teething, keeping gums and teeth clean can safeguard against cavities in the 'baby' teeth which can also cause damage to the permanent teeth underneath. *Medowie Gumnut Preschool* promotes the importance of good dental health to children and families.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
78	Food and beverages
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record

PURPOSE

At Medowie Gumnut Preschool we aim to promote children's general wellbeing by creating an environment that supports healthy dental and oral health habits and practices that can be maintained throughout the child's life. Our Service will provide food and drinks with consideration to the sugar content and ensure that drinking water is always available.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of Medowie Gumnut Preschool

IMPLEMENTATION

Medowie Gumnut Preschool believes it is important for all children to practice a high level of dental hygiene. We follow the guidelines of the Australian Dental Association and State Government Health Departments when caring for children's teeth.

We provide information and guidelines on good dental health practices, which are implemented into the daily routine, including swish and swallow after mealtimes, providing information about brushing teeth and tooth friendly snacks and drinks, and going to the dentist.

To minimise the risk of cavities forming we encourage children to eat nutritious foods and to avoid sticky and sugary foods. All food served and prepared at our Service comply with these guidelines by providing a variety of recommended vegetables, fruit, and dairy products. Children will be encouraged to drink water.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ MANAGEMENT/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- ensure educators, staff, students and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure
- ensure that food and drinks provided by the Service adhere to recommendations from organisations such as [Munch and Move \(NSW\)](#) and the Department of Health and Age Care program [Get Up and Grow](#), and other recognised authorities. The Royal Children's Hospital of Melbourne recommends that children should avoid foods and drinks such as:
 - Chocolate
 - Lollies
 - Sweetened breakfast cereals
 - Biscuits
 - Fruit bars
 - Dried fruit
 - Muesli bars
 - Soft drink
 - Flavoured milk
 - Juice

- Sports drinks
- Cordial
- Flavoured water
- always ensure children have access to safe drinking water
- ensure the routine incorporates 'swish and swallow' after each mealtime
- provide information to families about the [Child Dental Benefits Schedule \(CDBS\)](#)
- ensure enrolment form contains up to date information about each child's family dentist (in case of emergency)

EDUCATORS WILL:

- provide opportunities to discuss dental health education and food and drink choices to support dental health with children
- provide resources to support dental health learning such as books, posters, 'giant' teeth and toothbrushes, etc.
- pay particular attention to meal and snack times to ensure healthy food is being eaten
- encourage 'swish and swallow' after each mealtime
- give children bottles *before* they go to bed. When children take a bottle to bed it allows the lactose (sugar) in the milk to sit on their teeth which can cause tooth decay
- arrange visits by dental professionals so that children and families can learn correct brushing techniques and oral care
- provide dental care information to families through newsletters, posters, professional visits, web links and brochures
- promote Dental Health Week with children and families each year.

DENTAL EMERGENCIES

It is important for educators to be aware of how to manage dental accidents and emergencies. Our Service will:

- ensure there is an educator on duty at all times with current first aid qualifications to follow dental accident procedures
- ensure procedures for Administering First Aid are adhered to (including completing an Illness, Accident or Trauma record)
- ensure families are notified of any injury as soon as is reasonably practicable
- ensure that the phone number of an emergency dentist is located near the office phone
- ensure children are supervised at all times to minimise accidents and incidents.

SOURCES

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). Guide to the National Quality Framework.

Australian Government Services Australia Child Dental Benefits Schedule <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule>

Australian Government. Healthdirect. (2023) Dental care for babies and children.

Dental Health Services Victoria: <https://www.dhsv.org.au/oral-health-advice/Professionals/early-childhood>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023)

Raising Children Network: www.raisingchildren.net.au

Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) Act 2012

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Sharon Hales	Director	Jan 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V11.9.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • minor formatting edits within text 		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
<p>SEPTEMBER 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy review • links to health programs added within policy • sources checked for currency • continuous improvement/reflection section added • CCD related resources added 	<p>SEPTEMBER 2024</p>