Tooth Brushing in Child Care

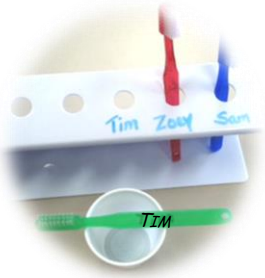
Supplies, Storage and Maintenance

1. Setting

Plan where to brush. All children, with teeth, should brush daily at child care. Brushing after a meal or snack is ideal in child care settings.

Group brushing at a table is preferred because caregivers can:

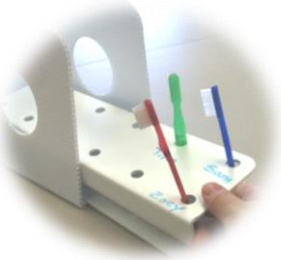
- Teach and model brushing.
- Supervise for sanitation.



2. Storage

Label toothbrush and holder with child's name. Store upright and spaced so that they do not touch. Germs grow on wet bristles. Let brushes air dry uncovered, such as on top of the refrigerator or cabinet. Do not store inside the cabinet or other dark places. Vented covers may be used with careful consideration:

- Covers must not touch the brushes.
- Covers and racks must be washed at least monthly (sooner if soiled).



3. Supplies

Use fluoride toothpaste to prevent cavities. Look for toothpaste that is "American Dental Association (ADA) approved." Store out of children's reach. Use flat handled toothbrushes to fit holders.

4. Cleaning

Wear gloves if you expect contact with blood or body fluids.

5. Replace

Replace brushes every 3 months. Replace sooner if bristles are frayed, or if brushes become dirty. Brushes become dirty and should be replaced if:

- Used by a sick child
- Dropped on the floor
- Has touched a dirty surface, another brush, or another person

Tooth Brushing in Child Care

Tooth Brushing Activity

1. Wash hands.

Wash hands before and after brushing. Washing before the meal is acceptable if brushing right after eating without leaving the table.

2. Dispense toothpaste.

Caregivers dispense toothpaste on cups or papers. Give children, under age two, a rice grain sized amount of toothpaste. Give children, over age two, a pea-sized amount. Optional: Fill cups with small amount of water.

3. Dispense brushes.

Watch each child take their own brush from the holder while the children remain seated at the table.

4. Brush.

Scoop the toothpaste onto the brush. Brush teeth for two minutes (outside, inside, and chewing surfaces). Spit excess toothpaste into cup. No need to rinse the mouth.

5. Rinse each brush.

Have each child rinse their own brush under water. A gloved care-giver may rinse brushes, but must change gloves after handling each child's brush.

6. Put each brush away.

Watch child (or gloved caregiver) put their brush back in the labeled holder. Caregivers must change gloves between handling each child's brush. Allow brushes to air dry.

7. Clean up.

Discard paper cups. Clean table or surfaces with warm soapy water. Cover table or surfaces with DHS approved sanitizer. Allow table or surfaces to air dry.

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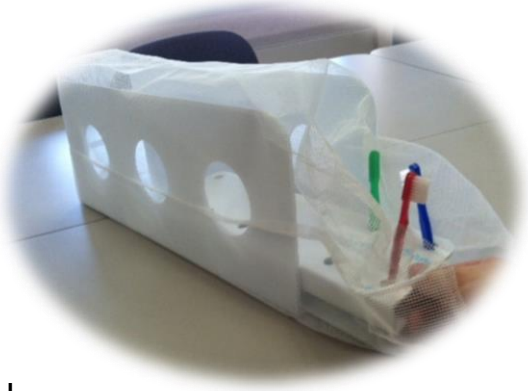
Tooth Brushing in Child Care

Things to Remember

DO NOT hold or rinse brushes "bouquet-style."

DO NOT allow children to share toothbrushes or cups.



DO NOT let brushes touch covers.

DO NOT store inside the cabinet or other dark places.

DO NOT use individual brush covers.

DO NOT leave toothpaste in children's reach.

DO NOT apply toothpaste directly to the child's brush.

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