Oral Health in Early Education and Child Care

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Overview

• What are Early Childhood Caries (ECC)?
• Who is at risk?
• Prevention
• *Caring for Our Children*, 3rd Edition (CFOC3) Standards
• Resources
Early Childhood Caries (ECC)

- Development of severe cavities (a.k.a. “caries”) before 5 years of age
- ECC is the number one chronic disease affecting young children
- ECC is found in 30% of children in the United States
Early Childhood Caries (ECC)

Increased Risk for ECC is Related to:

- Low income level
- Lack of fluoride
- Genetics
- Poor diet
- Poor oral hygiene
- Exposure to sugary foods
Early Childhood Caries (ECC)

- Children are recommended to have their first dental visit by age 1, or within six months after the first tooth erupts, whichever comes first (CFOC3 Standard 3.1.5.3)
- Recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD)
Who Gets ECC?

- Prevalent among:
  - Low socioeconomic status groups
  - Certain ethnic and cultural groups
  - Children with disabilities or special needs
Who Gets ECC?

- ECC can happen in any family!
Effects of ECC

- Pain
- Infection
- Poor self-esteem
- Difficulty chewing
- Poor growth & development
Effects of ECC: Pain

- Missed school days
- Trouble concentrating
- Leads to poor school readiness
- Poor sleep
- Difficulty chewing, which may lead to poor weight gain
- Difficulty speaking
Effects of ECC: Infection

Oral infection can lead to:

- Failure to thrive
- Growth delay
- Spread of infection
- Remember: the mouth is connected to the rest of the body
Effects of ECC: Self-Esteem

Poor self-esteem due to:

- Not wanting to smile
- Visible dental decay
- Visible dental work or correction
- Destruction and loss of teeth
- Damage to permanent teeth
Oral Health Risk Assessment Tool

The AAP has developed a tool to help health professionals assess the health of children’s teeth and gums during visits to their office.

Risk Factors:
- Mother’s oral health
- Access to dental care
- Use of bottle/sippy cup
- Frequent snacking
- Special health care needs

Protective Factors:
- Having a dental home
- Fluoridated water
- Fluoride treatment in past 6 months
- Tooth brushing and oral hygiene
Signs of Poor Oral Hygiene

White Spots

www.healthychildcare.org
Signs of Poor Oral Hygiene

Decay
Signs of Poor Oral Hygiene

Fillings
More About Risk Factors

1. Poor hygiene
2. Poor diet and nutrition
3. Inappropriate use of bottles and cups
4. Lack of fluoride
5. Genetics
Diet & Nutrition

- Risk for caries increases with frequent or prolonged contact of the teeth with food and drinks high in sugar

- Read food labels and learn content
Bottles and Cups

• Inappropriate use of bottles and cups can increase the risk for dental caries
• Bottles and cups should not be allowed in the crib or be used to calm down a child
• The frequent sipping of any liquid other than water between feedings increases the risk for tooth decay
• See CFOC3 Standard 4.1.3.8
Genetics

- Some children are more likely to develop ECC due to genetics
  - Produce excess Acidogenic bacteria
  - Excess bacteria leads to white spots
Prevention

- Child care providers advocating for use of fluoridated water and toothpaste
- Fluoridated water
- Fluoridated toothpaste
- Healthy diet
- Regular dental visits
Advocacy by Child Care Providers

“Caregivers/teachers should provide education for parents/guardians on good oral hygiene practices and avoidance of behaviors that increase the risk of early childhood caries” (CFOC3, Standard 3.1.5.3)
Advocacy by Child Care Providers

- Educate parents about the importance of good oral hygiene and regular dental visits
- Teach children to eat a nutritious diet while at child care and at home
- Encourage parents to “flip the lip” to check for white spots
Fluoridated Water

- Fluoride plays an important role in the prevention of dental caries
- Teeth that are exposed to fluoride are “stronger” than teeth without fluoride
- See the CDC’s ‘Oral Health Resources’ page for more information on fluoridated water in your area:
  http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MWF/Index.asp
Use of Tap Water

• It’s free!
• Most tap water has fluoride
• Filters
Fluoridated Toothpaste

- It is recommended that all children at high risk for dental caries use fluoridated toothpaste.
- Children younger than 2 should use a "smear" of toothpaste (see below).
- Children ages 2-6 should use a “pea-sized” amount (see below).
- See CFOC3 Standard 3.1.5.1.

www.healthychildcare.org
Healthy Diet

- Choose fresh fruit, vegetables, and whole grain snacks (CFOC3 Standard 4.1)
- Provide water throughout the day (CFOC3 Standard 4.2.0.6)
- 100% fruit juice is served in a cup (CFOC3 Standard 4.2.0.7)
  - Limited to 4 to 6 oz. a day
Regular Dental Visits

- Caregivers/teachers are encouraged to remind parents/guardians about dental or primary care provider visits to see if supplemental fluoride therapy is needed (CFOC3 Standard 3.1.5.3)
- It is recommended that all children be referred to a dentist by 12 months of age whenever possible
- To help with referrals, consider creating a list of local pediatric dentists and use this as a handout for families
Self Management Goals

- Regular dental visits
- Family receives dental treatment
- Healthy snacks
- Brush with fluoride toothpaste at least 2 times a day
- No soda
- Less or no juice
Self Management Goals

- Wean off bottle (no bottles for sleeping)
- Only water or milk in sippy cups
- Drink tap water
- Less or no junk food and candy
- Use xylitol (a sweetener that fights bacteria) spray, gel or dissolving tablets
Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition Standards

Some Important Oral Health-Related Standards:

- 3.1.5.1 Routine Oral Hygiene Activities
- 3.1.5.2 Toothbrushes and Toothpaste
- 3.1.5.3 Oral Health Education
- 4.2.0.7 100% Fruit Juice
- 9.2.3.14 Oral Health Policy
Available Resources

Caring for Our Children

Early Education and Child Care Initiatives

WATER

100% Juice

Parent's Checklist for Good Dental Health Practices in Child Care

www.healthychildcare.org
More Resources

• CAMBRA

• AAP Oral Health
http://www2.aap.org/oralhealth/

• AAPD Guidelines
Summary

• Baby teeth are important!
• Remind parents to take their child to the pediatrician and dental provider
• Protect children’s teeth with fluoride
• Monitor sugar intake
• No bottles or sippy cups in crib or bed
QUESTIONS???
Do you know about the AAP Section on Early Education and Child Care? It provides an AAP home for health professionals involved in early education and child care. Join the Section at:
http://www.healthychildcare.org/SOEECC.html
THANK YOU!

Stay tuned for the release of the **Oral Health Standards** spinoff from *Caring for Our Children, 3rd Ed.* from the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

- “Like” AAP Early Education and Child Care on Facebook
- Check out “What’s New!” on [www.healthychildcare.org](http://www.healthychildcare.org)
- **Now Available**: Preventing and Managing Infectious Diseases in Early Education and Child Care Online Learning Module
- **Now Available**: Medication Administration in Early Education and Child Care Online Learning Module