



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

# Safe and Healthy Children: A Public Health Resource Manual for Child Care Providers





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# Healthy Growth and Development



# Chapter 5: Healthy growth and development

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## Early developmental screening

There are certain milestones that a child is expected to achieve for healthy growth and development. Child care providers play a key role in early childhood development, by providing a stimulating and safe learning environment for children. Child care providers are also in a good position to help identify children who do not meet their ideal growth and development milestones.

It is better for children to have early and regular screening to identify areas of their development that may need support. The earlier the screening is done, the better. Making early referrals to the right community services is important.

Below are some of the resources to help support early identification of child developmental issues and accessing community services.

### **The looksee checklist - Nipissing district developmental screen**

The [Looksee checklist](#) is a checklist that helps parents follow their child's growth and development from one month of age to six years. Any "no" answer on the checklist means parents should discuss their child's development with a physician and/or developmental services agency such as KidsAbility.

### **The Caring for you and your new baby**

The [Caring for you and your new baby](#) booklet provides parenting information from birth to age six years with links to key websites. Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services reviews and approves the health information in this booklet. Hard copies of the Caring for you and your baby booklet, which is published annually, are available at Ontario Early Years Centres and all parents are provided with a copy at the time of their child's birth.

### **The first five years matter the most checklist**

The [First Five Years Matter the Most](#) is a checklist to help parents support their child's healthy growth and development from birth to age six years. It gives parents many important screening reminders and supports for development in their child's first five years of life.

### **The early identification services in Waterloo Region**

Family Compass Waterloo Region is your first step to finding community-based services and supports for parents, youth and children in Waterloo Region. This website offers the option to find information about general services for children and youth as well as specialized services that can help address developmental concerns. It also offers a link to resources designed for parents through the [Parenting Now](#) website. Visit [Family Compass Waterloo Region](#) for more information.

### **Public health services**

Help is available over the phone from a public health nurse by calling 519-575-4400 or TTY 519-575-4608. Call if you have questions about:

- Developmental and nutritional screening support
- Referrals to the right community services
- Health teaching and parenting education
- Training/presentations to service providers who work with children birth to six years and their families
- Promotion of healthy child development through community partnerships

## Dental health

### Dental tips for child care providers

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood illness. However, it is generally preventable through effective oral hygiene measures and a healthy diet. The baby teeth are important for young children to develop their eating ability, speech patterns, appearance and later to guide the eruption and position of their permanent teeth.

### Infants

- First teeth should be cleaned with a clean, wet, soft cloth twice a day.
- For children from birth to three years of age, parents should talk to their dentist about whether fluoridated toothpaste is right for their child and how much should be used.
- Children should begin regular dental check-ups by their first birthday. If a caregiver or parent notices any brown or black spots on the teeth or if a child bumps or hurts their teeth, a dental appointment should be made right away.
- Even babies and toddlers can get tooth decay. Check children's teeth at least once a month. Lift the upper lip to see the teeth right up to the gum line. If they look chalky, have white or brown spots or are chipped, the child should visit a dentist.

### Stage 1: Very early decay

White chalky areas around the gum line. **It can be reversed, if found early.**



### Stage 2: Decay

Brown areas or decayed spots along gumline. **Requires dental treatment.**



### Stage 3: Severe Decay

Spots continue to expand and tooth structure can be lost. **Can result in tooth loss.**



### Toddlers

- Brush at least twice a day; after breakfast and before bed.
- For children three to six years of age, use only a small amount (a portion the size of a green pea) of fluoridated toothpaste. Children in this age group should be helped by an adult when brushing their teeth until they are better at it.
- Children should change their toothbrush every three to four months or sooner if bristles are visually worn and/or immediately after an illness.
- Children should never take a nap or go to sleep at night with food, milk or juice.

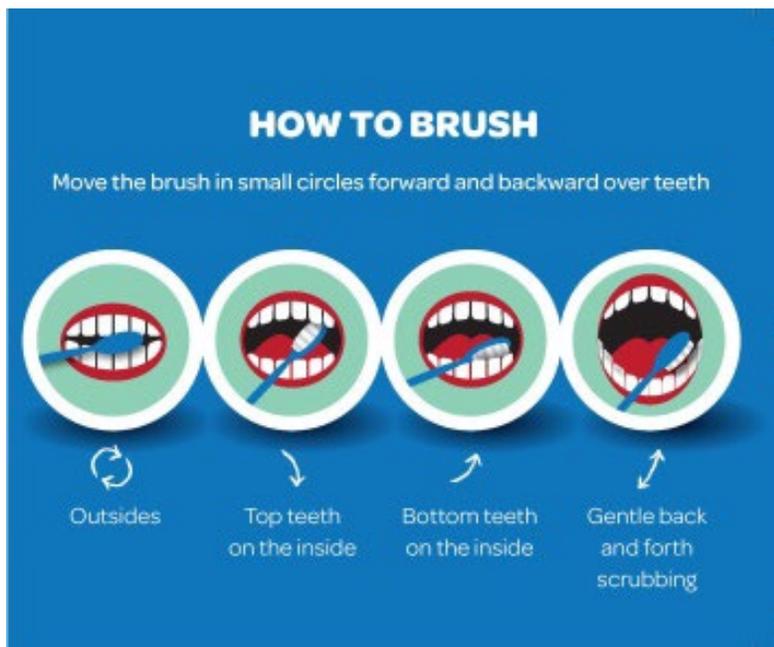
Offer nutritious snacks with low sugar content, using the [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#). If offering food with higher sugar content, limit to mealtime when saliva flow is higher and teeth can be brushed afterwards. See the Nutrition chapter for guidelines about what food to offer and information about planning menus.

### Proper tooth brushing technique

#### How to brush

Move the brush in small circles toward and backward over teeth:

- Outsides of teeth
- Top teeth on the inside
- Bottom teeth on the inside
- Gentle back and forth scrubbing



#### When do baby teeth erupt?

Baby teeth usually start to come into the mouth at around six months. By three years of age most children will have a full set of 20 baby teeth. The back baby teeth can be in the mouth for up to 12 years before they start to fall out. The table below shows the age that baby teeth come through.

#### Age baby teeth come through:

| Type of tooth      | Age              |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Front teeth        | 6 to 12 months   |
| First back molars  | 12 to 20+ months |
| Baby eye teeth     | 18 to 24 months  |
| Second back molars | 24 to 30 months  |

\*Teething does not cause fever, diarrhea or vomiting. If these symptoms occur, the child may be ill and a physician should be consulted.

### Tooth brushing programs in daycares

Here are some things to consider when implementing a tooth brushing program in a daycare setting. For tooth brushing technique, [please see section on proper tooth brushing technique above.](#)

#### Staff supervision of tooth brushing

- It is important that staff and volunteers closely supervise children during brushing to make sure children do not drop toothbrushes.
- For safety reasons, do not allow children to walk or run with a toothbrush in their mouth.
- Staff, volunteers and children must do hand hygiene (wash hands or use hand sanitizer) before and after tooth brushing.
- Do not allow sharing or borrowing of toothbrushes. If a child uses another child's toothbrush or if two toothbrushes come in contact, throw them away and replace them with new toothbrushes.
- Preschoolers tend to swallow toothpaste, therefore use only water for brushing unless it is otherwise recommended by an oral health professional.
- If dispensing toothpaste, prevent contamination. For example, place a drop of toothpaste on a paper towel/cup for each child and use their toothbrush to scoop up the toothpaste.
- Staff should clean and disinfect all areas used during tooth brushing on a regular basis, including sinks, surfaces, toothbrush holders and/or containers.

#### Toothbrushes

- Toothbrushes should be small enough to fit in the child's mouth and to cover no more than one to three teeth at a time.
- Use soft bristle toothbrushes.
- Clearly label each toothbrush with child's name.

- Replace toothbrushes every three to four months; sooner if bristles look worn or after illness.

#### Storage of toothbrushes

- Toothbrush storage holders should be made of non-porous, washable surface material and kept out of reach of children.
- Holders should allow air to flow through so that brushes can dry completely.
- Store toothbrushes so they cannot touch another toothbrush while air drying.
- Arrange holders so that toothbrushes are not above or below others to prevent contamination by dripping.

## Financial assistance for dental treatment

| Program   | Who is Eligible?  | Coverage   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>HSO<br/>(Healthy Smiles Ontario)</b>   | <p>Children age 17 and under and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are a resident of Ontario</li> <li>• Are a member of a household that meets the income eligibility requirements</li> <li>• See <a href="#">Ontario Healthy Smiles</a> for income thresholds</li> <li>• Note: Children 17 and under are automatically enrolled in Healthy Smiles Ontario when they or their family receive: Ontario Works, Temporary Care Assistance, Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities or the Ontario Disability Support Program</li> <li>• Children and youth with other dental insurance coverage are no longer automatically excluded.</li> </ul> | <p><b>For urgent and emergency oral health issues (covered by Healthy Smiles Ontario):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call Public Health to schedule a screening appointment at 519-575-4400 ext. 5010</li> </ul> <p><b>For basic dental care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go to <a href="#">Ontario Healthy Smiles</a> or Call Service Ontario INFOLine toll-free at 1-844-296-6306 (TTY toll-free at 1-800-387-5559)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services Children's Dental Clinic</b> | <p>Waterloo Region children age 17 and under</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are members of a household that meets the income eligibility requirements</li> <li>• Application found on the <a href="#">Public Health website</a>.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic dental care including preventive oral health services</li> <li>• For more information and applications, call 519-575-4400 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dial ext.3086 for Waterloo Clinic</li> <li>• Dial ext.3088 for Cambridge Clinic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

## **Smoke-free environment**

Second-hand smoke (SHS) is smoke inhaled by people who are near a smoker. There is no safe level of exposure to SHS. Children who breathe SHS have a higher risk from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, ear infections and cancer. It can also negatively impact a child's learning behavior and attention span. For more information on SHS, see the [Public Health website](#) or the [Best Start website](#).

## **Smoke-free legislation**

It is illegal for anyone to smoke or hold lit tobacco:

- In a motor vehicle (either moving or non-moving) while a person under the age of 16 is present in the vehicle
- On (or within 20 metres of) children's playgrounds and play areas
- On (or within 20 metres of) sporting and spectator areas

For more information on smoking legislation, see the [Public Health website](#).

## **Smoke-free environments and the Child Care and Early Years Act**

Any child care centre licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 must be smoke-free. A place where home child care is provided within the meaning of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 must be smoke-free at all times, even if children are not present. This includes any outdoor spaces used by the children. For more information on the Child Care and Early Years Act, see the [Ministry of Children and Youth Services website](#).

## Factsheets and resources

1. [Looksee checklist by ndds](#)
2. [Caring for you and your baby booklet](#)
3. [First Five Years Matter the Most](#)
4. [Family Compass Waterloo Region](#)
5. [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#)