

Toothbrushing Makes a Difference in ECEAP

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is committed to instilling the importance of toothbrushing from an early age. Early childhood is a critical time for starting good, lifelong habits. Preschoolers are prone to cavity development. Regular brushing helps remove plaque and prevents tooth decay, ensuring their teeth stay strong, while also improving fine motor development. A healthy mouth contributes to overall physical health, boosts confidence, and allows children to focus on learning. By incorporating toothbrushing into their daily routine, we empower our preschoolers to maintain good oral hygiene throughout their lives.



Toothbrushing in the ECEAP Classroom

- Teachers model correct way to brush teeth through engaging demonstrations.
- Toothbrushing in a group activity, fosters a sense of belonging that not only makes it more enjoyable but also encourages peer learning.
- Teachers can ensure that children are spending adequate time on all surfaces by counting or singing a song.



Dental Exam Requirements in ECEAP

95% of ECEAP children received dental screenings or exams and follow up care.

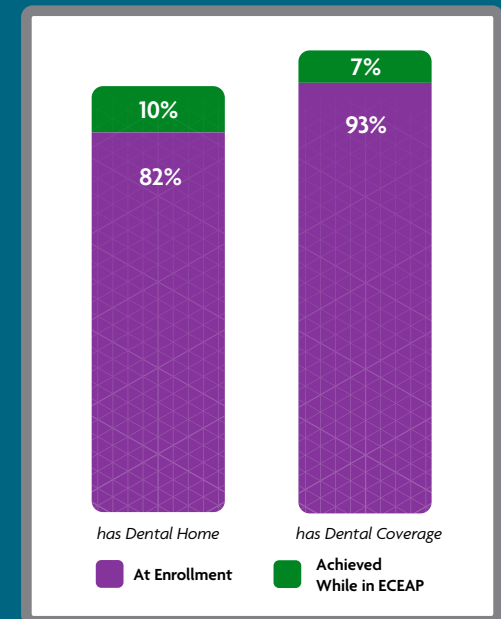


Family Engagement

- Parents are encouraged to extend toothbrushing routines at home.
- ECEAP staff provide educational materials and resources to families, so they understand the importance of oral hygiene and the impacts on kindergarten readiness.
- Parents are given the support and help they need to follow up exams and treatment.

2022-23 ECEAP Health Outcomes

*n=15,514 Children Who Were Enrolled
120 or More Days*



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Modifying Toothbrushing in the ECEAP Classroom

ECEAP believes in inclusivity and ensuring that every child receives the care they deserve. Toothbrushing in ECEAP is intended to be an enjoyable experience for every child, regardless of abilities. There are many ways to adapt or modify daily toothbrushing in a preschool setting and at home to ensure a positive learning experience for all children.



Adaptive Tools:

Explore toothbrushes with different handles, sizes, and textures. Adaptive tools can make toothbrushing more comfortable for children with fine motor challenges.



Visual Supports:

Use visual schedules, social stories, or visual timers to create a predictable routine. This helps children with autism or other sensory processing difficulties understand and prepare for the toothbrushing activity.



Sensory-friendly Toothpaste:

Choose toothpaste with mild flavors and textures. Allow children to explore and choose their toothpaste to make the experience more engaging.



Positioning Matters:

Consider different seating arrangements or positions to accommodate children with physical disabilities. Ensure accessibility and comfort during toothbrushing time.



Music and Timers:

Use fun and soothing music during toothbrushing. Timers with visual or auditory cues can help children understand the duration of the activity.