



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

April 29, 2020

RE: Brushing in Child Care Programs That Remain Open During COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Program Administrator(s):

I hope this correspondence finds you and your families safe and well. With the increase in the COVID-19 Pandemic in our world and state, more attention has been placed on evaluating practices in schools and healthcare settings that could be harmful to the community and contribute to further spread of COVID 19.

In our collaborative work with the National Center on Early Childhood Wellness and National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, I would like to share the below guidance regarding **Brushing in Child Care Programs During COVID 19 Pandemic**.

*“Brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice a day is an important tool in the prevention of tooth decay and is included as a Head start program performance standard and voluntarily in most all licensed childcare centers. However, in response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Guidance for Childcare Programs that Remain Open to alter or halt daily group activities that may promote transmission of COVID-19, it is recommended that **toothbrushing in classrooms be suspended** until it is considered safe again. There is a possibility of transmitting the virus to others via salivary droplets from spitting into a sink or a cup after brushing. To continue to promote good oral health and the prevention of tooth decay, childcare program staff can encourage parents to brush their child’s teeth with fluoride toothpaste before coming to the childcare center and before bedtime.”*

Please see below some additional resources regarding toothbrushing that you may also share with parents.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. *Guidance for Childcare Programs that Remain Open* [webpage]. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. *Use and Handling of Toothbrushes* [webpage]. <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/faqs/toothbrush-handling.html>

Resources

- National Center for Early Childhood Health and Wellness. 2016. *Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles: Brushing Your Child's Teeth*. Elk Grove Village, IL: National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness.
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/brushing-your-childs-teeth>
- Tooth Talk. 2020. *Brushing Is Fun: How to Brush Young Children's Teeth* [web-based video]. <http://toothtalk.org/portfolio-view/brushing-is-fun-how-to-brush-young-childrens-teeth>

Thank you for your recognition and value for oral health and its relation to overall health. We look forward to a return to toothbrushing in school settings and will keep you posted when those recommendations are reinstated.

As always, should you have any concerns or questions, do not hesitate to give me a call. I look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely yours,

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