



## Importance of Early and Routine Dental Care For Children

Oral health is crucial to the overall health of your child. Children with healthy teeth are less likely to have problems with eating, learning and speech development. Children with poor oral health have been found to have more difficulty with school performance, social life and success in later life. In addition, dental neglect is a recognized form of child abuse and neglect. The key to preventing these negative consequences is early and routine dental care.

### HOW TO DEVELOP A HEALTHY SMILE

- Wipe your baby's gums with a damp washcloth after every feeding.
- Avoid putting your baby to bed with a bottle.
- Switch from bottle to cup as soon as baby is able to hold a cup.
- Visit the dentist around the child's first birthday.
- Prevent thumb, finger and pacifier sucking past the age of five.

### HOW TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY SMILE

- Eat healthy snacks.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Limit sweets for special times only.
- Brush and floss teeth twice a day.

Over  
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- Teach kids how to brush their own teeth.
- Use fluoride toothpaste.
- Watch for teeth grinding. If your child is grinding their teeth, seek professional help.
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**There are services available for those without dental insurance. Check with your school nurse, family physician, dentist or contact the Parent Helpline for more information.**

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**For more online tip cards, visit [www.KCSL.org](http://www.KCSL.org) under the "Resources" tab.**

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**Parenting questions? Call the Parent Helpline: 1-800-CHILDREN or email/text 1800children@kcsl.org**

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