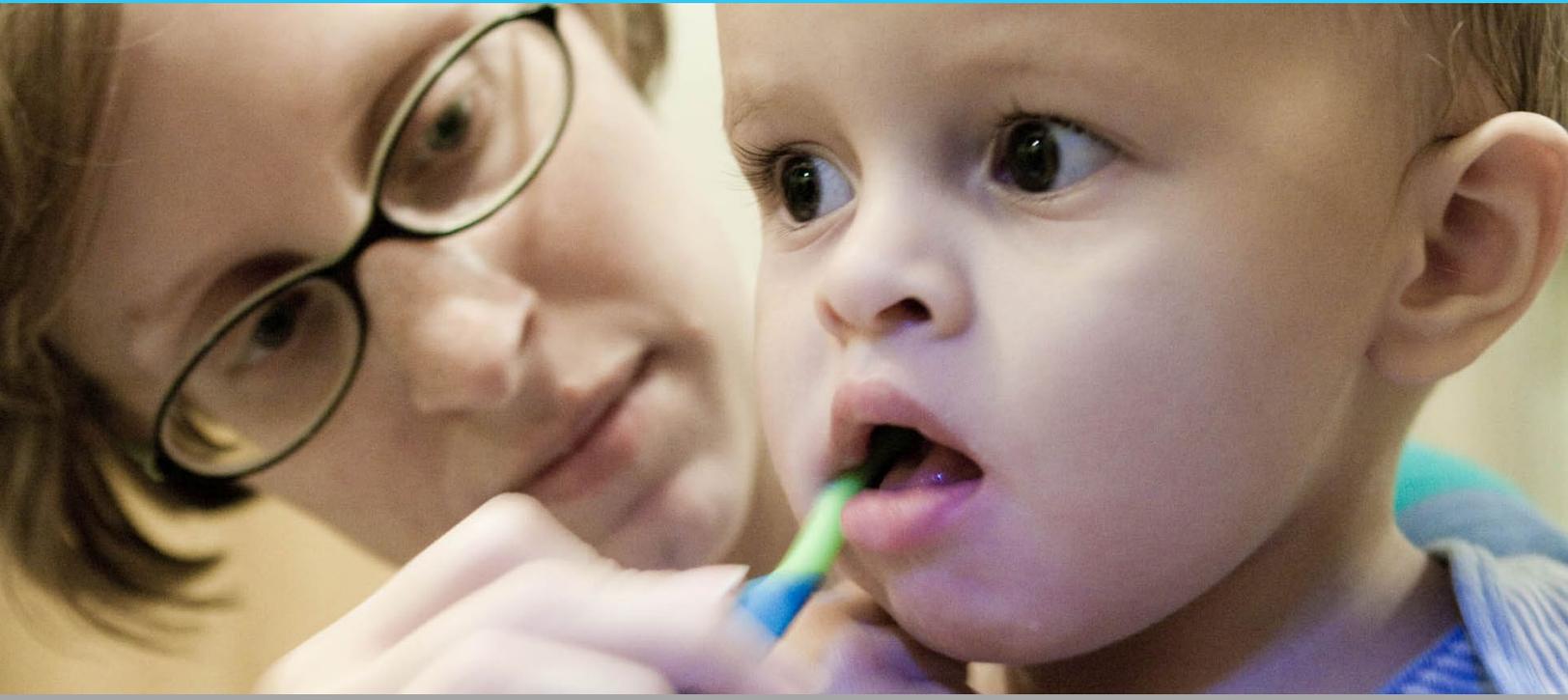


Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles



Taking Care of Your Baby's Oral Health

Taking good care of your baby's mouth and teeth is important. A baby's first tooth usually comes in at around age 6 to 10 months. Healthy primary (baby) teeth help children chew food and speak clearly.



School readiness begins with health!

Tips for keeping your baby's mouth and teeth healthy:

- Cleaning your baby's gums and teeth
 - Clean your baby's gums even before you can see the first tooth. Use a clean, damp washcloth to wipe the gums. Do this twice a day, especially after night feeding.
 - After your baby's first tooth comes in, use a baby toothbrush with soft bristles and a small head. Put a smear (size of a grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste on the toothbrush, and brush all sides of your baby's teeth.
 - Brush your baby's teeth in the morning and before bedtime.
- Using bottles and sippy cups
 - Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle or sippy cup filled with breast milk, infant formula, fruit juice, or other liquids besides water. Liquids that contain sugar can cause tooth decay.
- Using pacifiers
 - Clean the pacifier with soap and water.
 - Never clean a pacifier in your mouth before giving it to your baby. Germs that cause tooth decay can pass from your mouth to your baby's mouth.
 - If the pacifier gets worn out or breaks, get a new one.
 - Do not dip the pacifier in sweet foods like sugar, honey, or syrup.
 - Never put a pacifier on a string or ribbon around your baby's neck. It could choke your baby.



Use a smear of fluoride toothpaste.

This handout was prepared by the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness under cooperative agreement #9OHC0013 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start.

National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. 2016. *Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles: Taking Care of Your Baby's Oral Health*. Elk Grove Village, IL: National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness.

Photos requiring credits: vandenn / Flickr / CC BY-NC (front page, top); Cristian Bernal / Flickr / CC BY-NC-ND (front page, bottom)



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Health and Wellness