
INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Oral Health



First Edition, 2006



California Childcare Health Program
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This *Instructor's Guide* is a supplement for trainers of the California Training Institute's curriculum for Child Care Health Advocates.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORAL HEALTH MODULE

This *Instructor's Guide* provides trainers with an outline for the teaching of the *Oral Health* module. Participants will learn about the consequences of tooth decay in early childhood and how tooth decay can be prevented. Participants will discuss new findings about oral health promotion, as well as the role of the Child Care Health Advocate (CCHA) in spreading up-to-date information. Trainers will instruct participants about what they should know about oral health and the various ways they can improve oral health practices in their own early care and education (ECE) programs.

Learning Objectives:

1. To describe the major oral health problems among children in ECE programs.
2. To implement prevention strategies which can decrease the prevalence of oral health problems.
3. To describe three ways a CCHA can assist ECE programs in meeting the oral health needs of the young children they serve.
4. To identify oral health resources to assist and support ECE providers and families.

Primary Messages:

1. Baby teeth are very important.
2. Decay in baby teeth is not just a minor annoyance.
3. The risk factors for dental decay in early childhood include giving children sugary snacks frequently, putting infants to bed with bottles filled with liquids other than water and giving children sweet liquids in bottles or sippy cups.
4. Parents and caregivers may not understand the key concepts of oral health.
5. Adults can spread the germs that cause cavities.
6. ECE providers can prevent tooth decay through healthy practices and through the education of families in their programs.
7. CCHAs can help develop community resources so that families have access to health insurance that will cover dental care and access to dentists who work with children.

Materials and Equipment Needed:

1. Copy of module: *Oral Health*
2. Copy of *Instructor's Guide: Oral Health*
3. Flip chart/whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
4. Masking tape for posting flip chart paper
5. LCD projector or overhead projector
6. Computer for PowerPoint slides
7. CDs of slides or transparencies
8. Handouts
 - a. Handouts in the *Oral Health* module
 - i. Handouts from California Childcare Health Program (CCHP), Oakland, CA

Handout Title	Page Number in Module
<i>Caries-Risk Assessment Tool (CAT)</i>	15
<i>Fact Sheets for Families: Dental Caries</i>	16
<i>Fact Sheets for Families: Good Nutrition and Healthy Smiles</i>	17
<i>Fact Sheets for Families: Teething</i>	18
<i>Fact Sheets for Families: Tooth Decay in Young Children</i>	19
<i>Fact Sheets for Families: Tooth and Mouth Care</i>	20
<i>Fact Sheets for Families: Toothbrushing Is Important</i>	21
<i>Health and Safety Notes: Oral Health for Children with Disabilities and Special Needs</i>	23
<i>Health and Safety Notes: Thumb, Finger or Pacifier Sucking</i>	25
<i>Notice to Parents about CAT Assessment Findings and Recommendation</i>	27

- ii. Handouts from First 5 California Oral Health Education & Training Project

Handout Title	Page Number in Module
<i>Healthy Teeth Begin at Birth</i> (handed out as a brochure separate from this module)	—
<i>Optimally Fluoridated Areas by Zip Code</i>	28

- b. Handouts in the *Instructor's Guide*

Appendix Title	Appendix Number
<i>Health & Safety in the Child Care Setting: Promoting Children's Oral Health: A Curriculum for Health Professionals and Child Care Providers</i> (handed out as a booklet separate from the <i>Instructor's Guide</i>)	12A
<i>Oral Health Self-Assessment for ECE Programs</i>	12B
<i>Using the Oral Health Module</i>	12C

SUGGESTED TRAINING OUTLINE

Outline	Method	Time (Minutes)
I. Introduction to the Oral Health Module	—	10
A. Assessment of Group Knowledge	Questioning	5
B. Introduction/Rationale to Oral Health	Lecture	5
II. Promoting Oral Health in the ECE Setting	—	50–70
A. What Is Oral Health?	Lecture and Discussion	10
B. Guidelines and Best Practices	Small Group Activity	20
C. The Role of the CCHA	Discussion	5
<i>D. Optional: Caries Risk Assessment</i>	<i>Handout Review</i>	<i>10</i>
E. Healthy Snacks	Small Group Activity	10
<i>F. Optional: Teaching Toothbrushing</i>	<i>Large Group Activity</i>	<i>10</i>
G. Oral Health Resources	Large Group Discussion	5
III. Summary and Closure	—	10–20
<i>A. Optional: Using the Oral Health Module</i>	<i>Small Group Activity</i>	<i>10</i>
B. Next Steps for the CCHA	Large Group Discussion	5
C. Summary and Closure	Brief Closing Activity	5

Total time: 70–100 minutes

OUTLINE AND INSTRUCTIONS

Oral Health

I. Introduction to the Oral Health Module

A. **Topic:** Assessment of Group Knowledge

Method: Questioning

Instructions:

1. Ask participants several of the following questions, choosing questions most appropriate for your participants. Ask them to raise their hand if they:
 - Routinely brush the teeth of children in their care.
 - Assist children in toothbrushing.
 - Teach about oral health and cavity prevention.
 - Provide healthy, low-sugar snacks.
 - Refer children to low-fee dentists.
2. Ask participants several of the following questions, choosing questions most appropriate for your participants:
 - a. How do you prevent tooth decay?
 - b. How do you teach parents about dental health?

B. **Topic:** Introduction/Rationale to Oral Health

Method: Lecture

Instructions:

1. Begin by stating that tooth decay and gum disease are the most common and least treated chronic diseases in children. Most oral health problems can be prevented. Good oral health in children is essential to their general well-being. For many children, dental problems get in the way of eating, sleeping, playing, learning and smiling. In California, untreated tooth decay in children is twice as common as it is in the rest of the population. CCHAs need to educate ECE providers and families about ways to have good oral health.
2. State that children are at higher risk for tooth decay. Ask participants to think of the reasons why this is the case. Refer to page 2 of the module.

II. Promoting Oral Health in the ECE Setting

A. **Topic:** What Is Oral Health?

Method: Lecture and Discussion

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to define *oral health*: Keeping your mouth, teeth and gums free of bacteria and in good condition to prevent tooth decay and gum disease.

2. Ask participants why oral health is important. Ask participants to think about the times when they have had tooth pain and to describe its impact on them—both as children and as adults. Describe and emphasize the consequences of tooth decay (refer to page 19 of the module) and the importance of prevention. Caries is not always simply a small hole in the tooth that can be filled, and then the problem resolved. Problems may be much more severe. When dental caries and tooth decay are ignored, children will suffer from pain and discomfort, from the inability to concentrate and from absences from school. Decay in young children can cause permanent problems in their adult teeth and in their smile. Decay can also affect sleep, nutrition and overall health, including self-esteem.
3. Note to Trainer: It is very helpful to have pictures of severe tooth decay so that participants can understand the seriousness of tooth decay and the significant impact it has on the child's physical and emotional health. Pictures can be found in *A Health Professional's Guide to Pediatric Oral Health Management*, a series of online modules for health professionals at: <http://www.mchoralhealth.org/PediatricOH/index.htm>.
4. State that non-White children are even more vulnerable than White children to suffering from dental caries. About 40% of non-White preschoolers need dental care, as compared with 16% of White preschoolers.
5. State that tooth decay is completely preventable, and tooth decay prevention is part of caring for young children. State that the understanding about tooth decay has recently changed, and scientists now understand that tooth decay can be passed from one person to the next.
6. State that now that participants understand that tooth decay can be serious and that young children are at risk, it is time to look at guidelines for prevention.

B. Topic: Guidelines and Best Practices

Method: Small Group Activity

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into four groups and assign each group one of the following fact sheets to summarize. Give them 10 minutes, and then ask each group to share five key points with the larger group. Trainers should know the facts on each handout in order to fill in details as necessary.
 - a. *Fact Sheets for Families: Dental Caries* (page 16 in module)
 - b. *Fact Sheets for Families: Tooth Decay in Young Children* (page 19 in module)
 - c. *Fact Sheets for Families: Tooth and Mouth Care* (page 20 in module)
 - d. *Fact Sheets for Families: Toothbrushing Is Important* (page 21 in module)
2. Make sure that by the end of the small group work, you have covered what tooth decay is, how it is transmitted and how it can be prevented.
3. Discuss what providers are already doing in their programs and what else they can do to promote oral health.
4. Discuss the challenges of promoting oral health in the ECE setting and how they can be addressed.
5. Review *Handout: Health and Safety Notes: Oral Health for Children with Disabilities and Special Needs* on page 23 of the module.

6. State that the California Childcare Health Program (CCHP) has a useful curriculum for health professionals and ECE providers titled *Health & Safety in the Child Care Setting: Promoting Children's Oral Health* (2005) (*Appendix 12A*). This resource can be downloaded from: http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/oral_health_11_v6b.pdf.
7. State that the new *First Smiles Curriculum*, an additional resource for California health and ECE professionals, can be located at: <http://www.first5oralhealth.org>.

C. Topic: The Role of the CCHA

Method: Discussion

Instructions:

1. Ask participants how they can promote oral health in their programs. Sort their answers into the following categories, adding the categories that they do not mention.
 - a. Observe programs and assess current practices, policies and procedures.
 - b. Provide educational materials for ECE providers, children and parents.
 - c. Advocate for oral health prevention.
 - d. Review safety policies and procedures.
 - e. Link programs with health department, health insurance and other resources.
 - f. Include oral health in health assessments whenever possible.
 - g. Work with Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs).
2. *Optional: Ask participants to fill out the Oral Health Self-Assessment for ECE Programs in Appendix 12B.*

D. Optional Topic: Caries Risk Assessment

Method: Handout Review

Instructions:

1. *Instruct participants to review Handout: Caries-Risk Assessment Tool (CAT) on page 15 of the module. Ask them to answer the following questions:*
 - a. *Reviewing the environmental conditions, is your ECE setting in the low-risk, medium-risk or high-risk category for cavities?*
 - b. *How can you begin to perform assessments on the children so that you can determine whether each child in your program is at low, moderate or high risk for cavities?*
 - c. *Do you have any children in your program who have health problems or developmental delays that would put them at increased risk for cavities?*

E. Topic: Healthy Snacks

Method: Small Group Activity

Instructions:

1. State that an important part of the CCHA's role is to provide healthy snacks. State that preferences and patterns of eating develop when children are very young—participants should not underestimate the influence that eating habits in early childhood can have on the rest of children's lives.
2. Divide participants into small groups. Direct participants to *Activity 1* on page 7 of the module.
3. Direct participants to *Activity 2* on page 7 of the module.

F. *Optional Topic: Teaching Toothbrushing*

Method: Large Group Activity

Instructions:

1. *Encourage participants to teach young children about the importance of toothbrushing and proper brushing technique. Show participants how you would talk about toothbrushing with young children:*
 - a. *Explain the importance of getting all the “germs” off their teeth. State that if they do not, here is what would happen (puppet show or role play):*
 - i. *Show the photograph of healthy teeth and the teeth with cavities.*
 - ii. *State that it would hurt to chew.*
 - iii. *State that they would have bad breath.*
 - iv. *State that they might have to have a cavity filled.*
 - v. *State that it might be hard to speak clearly.*
 - b. *Show children how to keep teeth and gums healthy by demonstrating:*
 - i. *Dry brushing to acquaint children with the sensation of brushing.*
 - ii. *How much fluoride toothpaste to place on a toothbrush—it should be a “smear” (a spot) or “pea-sized” (no more than the size of a pea).*
 - iii. *How to brush the outer, inner and flat surfaces of the upper and lower teeth.*
 - iv. *How to brush the tongue.*
2. *Ask participants how they currently teach toothbrushing to children.*
3. *Ask participants how they currently store toothbrushes. Encourage participants to store them properly, reminding them that toothbrushes should be air dried and should not touch each other.*
4. *Encourage participants to make toothbrush holders with the children in their care. Direct participants to Activity 3 on page 7 of the module.*
5. *Hand out copies of the songs from pages 26 to 29 of Health & Safety in the Child Care Setting: Promoting Children’s Oral Health. Sing the songs with the participants.*

G. *Topic: Oral Health Resources*

Method: Large Group Discussion

Instructions:

1. State that CCHAs are often in a position to link families to dental care by making referrals for dental insurance and referrals to dentists.
2. Ask participants what kind of resources they use in their community and how many participants are currently working with families to ensure routine dental checkups.
3. State that it is the role of the CCHA to assist programs in linking with local dental clinics, dental schools, dental societies and sources of low-cost health insurance (such as Child Health and Disability Prevention [CHDP]) by providing a list of local resources, telephone numbers and Web sites.
4. Ask participants to share their local resources.
5. Review the resources on pages 9 to 10 of the module.

If you have experienced CCHAs in the room, do one or more of the following:

1. Group them in separate groups and ask them to describe how they promote oral health in their settings.
2. Ask them to describe what kind of assessments they currently provide.
3. Ask them to describe how they talk to parents about oral health and preventing tooth decay.
4. Ask them to teach the nonexperienced CCHAs songs and activities that promote toothbrushing and tooth decay prevention.
5. Pair them up with nonexperienced participants and instruct the nonexperienced to ask questions of the experienced CCHAs about how they conduct toothbrushing and how they teach oral hygiene to families in their ECE programs.

III. Summary and Closure

A. **Optional Topic:** *Using the Oral Health Module*

Method: *Small Group Activity*

Instructions:

1. *Explain to the participants that the curriculum is a rich resource for them and encourage them to become familiar with it. Towards this end, spend a few minutes looking through it together. Explain that participants will work in pairs to go through the module to find the answers to these questions.*
2. *Hand out Appendix 12C. Tell the participants they have 5 to 10 minutes to locate the answers.*
3. *Note to Trainer: Participants may feel that this is “busy work.” Let them know that our goal is to use our time today to give them new tools and resources, and the curriculum is one such resource. Explain that becoming familiar with the curriculum is one way to help them determine how they will improve quality in their setting.*

B. **Topic:** Next Steps for the CCHA

Method: Large Group Discussion

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to discuss the practices and policies they can use in their settings in order to prevent tooth decay.
2. Ask participants to describe the ways that they can teach children and families about the importance of oral health.
3. Ask participants to identify what community resources they need to find or develop in order to help families in their program access good dental care.

C. **Topic:** Summary and Closure

Method: Brief Closing Activity

Instructions:

1. Summarize the key points shared by participants. Review by stating that it is the role of the CCHA to know about the kind of preventive health care young children need, the types of health insurance that are available to families in their programs, how to understand health records, the types of different screening tools and how to prepare children for these screenings.
2. Next Steps: Direct participants to write down one next step they will take as a result of this training. Ask participants to share these with the group.

APPENDIX 12A

Health & Safety in the Child Care Setting: Promoting Children’s Oral Health: A Curriculum for Health Professionals and Child Care Providers

The Health & Safety in the Child Care Setting: Promoting Children’s Oral Health: A Curriculum for Health Professionals and Child Care Providers is a booklet that is handed out separate from the *Instructor’s Guide*.

APPENDIX 12B

Oral Health Self-Assessment for ECE Programs

Instructions: Put check marks in the boxes to indicate which of these practices are current practices in your ECE setting.

Observe Programs and Assess Current Practices, Policies and Procedures

- Use and give out fluoride toothpaste in a hygienic way.
- Assist children with brushing.
- Store toothbrushes properly.
- Give out snacks that are frequently low in sugar and carbohydrates.
- Enforce injury prevention.
- Train staff for dental emergencies.

Provide Educational Materials for ECE Providers, Children and Parents

- Post attractive educational materials that are easily seen.
- Promote National Dental Health Month (February).
- Provide a list of resources to help educate staff, parents and children about oral health.
- Model the use of these materials in your work.
- Invite dental care providers in the community to be part of “circle time” as a guest visitor.
- Give advice to parents in positive ways: “Babies can go to sleep with a bottle of water.”

Advocate for Oral Health Prevention

Tell parents that:

- Adults can spread the germs that cause cavities.
- Children should not have anything put in their mouths if it has been in another person’s mouth.
- Children should see a dentist by their first birthday.
- Children should brush their teeth with fluoride toothpaste after breakfast and before bed.
- Children should be given limited amounts of juice, sweet drinks and snacks.

Link Programs with Health Department, Health Insurance and Other Resources

- Assist programs in linking with sources of low-cost health insurance.
- Make referrals to local dentists or dental clinics when necessary.
- Find out if there is fluoride in the county water and whether it is used in the ECE program.

Include Oral Health in Health Assessments Whenever Possible

To detect tooth decay or dental caries:

- Look* for signs of cavities or infection.
- Listen* for complaints.
- Feel* for fever or swelling around the mouth, cheeks and jaw.
- Smell* for bad breath odor, which could be a sign of cavities or gum infection.

APPENDIX 12B (continued)

Work with Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs)

- ❑ Let the CCHC know about the specific needs of the families and children you serve and ask for materials that meet those needs.
- ❑ Ask your CCHC about organizing a dental screening for the children in your program.
- ❑ Consider using the *Caries-Risk Assessment Tool (CAT)* (American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, 2002) for screening children.

APPENDIX 12C

Using the Oral Health Module

Topic: Using the Oral Health Module

Method: Small Group Activity

Instructions: Review the module and find the answers to the following questions.

According to the module:

1. What are some factors that can increase or reduce a child's risk for developing tooth decay?
2. For bottle-fed children, what can be done to reduce the risk of tooth decay?
3. What are some phone numbers for dental insurance resources?
4. Do pacifiers affect oral health and, if so, when?
5. How often should toothbrushes be replaced?