

## Supervised toothbrushing in practice at Kensington Life Bank Nursery, Liverpool

### How do you promote good oral health in your setting?

All our children take part in supervised toothbrushing daily from baby room to preschool children.

### Why did you decide to do this?

We were noticing more and more children with visible tooth decay from as young as 2 years old, and some preschool children were even being admitted to hospital to have teeth taken out.

We were made aware that in the Kensington area, dentists were not taking on new patients, so parents couldn't register their children, which meant children's teeth were not being checked.

Helping children learn good toothbrushing habits from such a young age will support so many children and help build their confidence and self-esteem as they grow into adults.

### How does it work in practice?

When parents enrol their child at the setting, we ask for consent in the enrolment pack for their child to take part in the supervised toothbrushing programme. Toothbrushing is now just part of our daily routine. Staff use songs to help with toothbrushing, and when the children hear them, they run to the table and sit ready, waiting for their toothbrushes. All staff who work with the children help support them to learn how to brush their teeth.

With support from All Together Smiling, we have run parent workshops to help parents learn about good oral health, including talking about sugar in foods and drinks. We have displays around the setting that promote toothbrushing and show how sugar can cause tooth decay. Staff also do regular activities with the children, sorting foods into good and bad choices for healthy teeth.

We regularly give out toothbrushes and toothpaste to parents to help support toothbrushing at home, and parents know they can always ask us for more if they need it.

### What are the benefits?

It is really rewarding to see children's confidence grow as they learn to brush their teeth and understand why it is important. When children first start nursery, they can be a little unsure about joining in, but after a few weeks they really enjoy it as they do it together with their friends.

Parents often tell us they find toothbrushing at home difficult, as some children are reluctant with their parents. This reassures them that their child also gets a chance to brush their teeth at nursery alongside their friends.

When we were inspected by Ofsted in 2023, we were able to talk about our toothbrushing scheme and it was given positive recognition by the inspector, especially for being so proactive with our children.

### What are the challenges?

You need to build toothbrushing into your daily routine and stick to it, otherwise time can run away with you and it's easy to forget. Once it becomes part of the routine, the children really look forward to it and will even remind you that it's toothbrushing time.

