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**COMPONENT: CHILD NUTRITION**

**SUBJECT: TOOTH BRUSHING**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** To ensure staff promote effective dental hygiene among children in conjunction with meals on daily with toothpaste containing fluoride.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE:**

- ❖ **During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Highland Rim Head Start will not practice brushing teeth in the classroom, however, parents will be provided oral hygiene education via newsletters, text messages, Facebook posts, and face to face information during parent meetings on how to encourage tooth brushing within the home. Highland Rim Head Start will also provide a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste to every child to take home in order to practice proper oral hygiene which will encourage and enhance dental health.**

Each child/staff will have his/ her own toothbrush, labeled by name, so that toothbrushes are never shared.

Each classroom will have a toothbrush holder that is open to circulating air, so that the bristles do not touch any surface including another toothbrush.

Tooth brush holders will be cleaned and sanitized at least once **daily**.

Toothbrushes will be replaced every three months (at minimum) and/or when the bristles become bent or worn, and/or when an outbreak of an infectious contagious disease has occurred such as strep throat, thrush, mono, etc. (Notify Health Services for toothbrushes.)

The sink area must be sanitized before and after tooth brushing activities.

To prevent cross contamination of the toothpaste tube, teaching staff will ensure that a pea-sized amount of toothpaste is always dispensed onto something other than the toothbrush first (wax paper, paper cups, etc.) Do not use toothpaste tube to directly dispense toothpaste onto toothbrushes.

Children will be taught proper tooth brushing techniques by teaching staff:

1. Staff will serve as role models by brushing their own teeth after a meal.
2. Teaching staff will assist children with tooth brushing when needed. (gloves are to be worn when assisting children and changed between each child)
3. Teaching staff will encourage children to use the horizontal scrub technique. The tooth brush is placed horizontally on the teeth along the gum line and moved back and forth with a scrubbing motion, ensuring to scrub all sides of their teeth the inside, outside, and eating surface.
4. Teaching staff will be responsible for ensuring children do not share the sink when brushing, in an effort to prevent cross contamination.
5. Teaching staff will ensure that toothbrushes are rinsed and stored properly after use.

Family Advocate will work in collaboration with families to provide support, assistance, guidance, and resources regarding dental health.