

## Children's oral health

At the recent Council meeting, the Association adopted a formal policy on children's oral health. This is the second in a series of policy positions. See the August/September edition of the *Journal* for the first policy paper on food, diet and oral health.

Children are dependent on adults to support their growth and development. They should enjoy a high standard of health and well being. The Irish Dental Association promotes the attainment of optimal oral health in all children.



### Health and healthcare equity

The Association values:

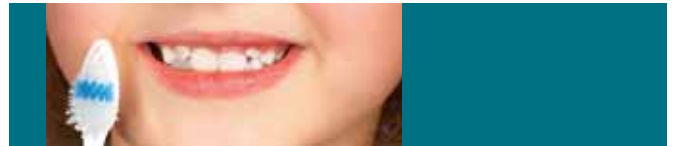
1. oral health as an integral part of the overall health and well being of children;
2. dental care for children that is evidence-based, safe, comprehensive, accessible, affordable, high quality, continuous and respectful of children's needs;
3. universal access to dental care that meets the unique needs of children and promotes optimal oral health; and,
4. improvements in access to dental care that reduce or eliminate financial, logistical and cultural barriers, and that address oral health inequalities.



### Dental workforce

The Association values:

1. a dental workforce that can meet the needs of children by being adequate in size, distribution, diversity and competency;
2. the role and responsibilities of general dental practitioners, HSE dental surgeons and all members of the dental team in treating children;
3. continuing education of all members of the dental team so that they are kept up to date with developments in the dental treatment of children;
4. the role and recognises the responsibility of the dentist and dental team in identifying and reporting suspicions of neglect or non-accidental injury in children to the appropriate authorities; and,
5. the unique skills and knowledge that paediatric dentists bring to children's oral healthcare and recommends that the specialty of paediatric dentistry should be formally recognised by the Dental Council in Ireland.



### Public health measures that promote oral health

The Association values:

1. the implementation of evidence-based public health programmes to prevent or minimise dental disease in children;
2. water fluoridation as a key population measure for controlling dental caries in Ireland;
3. the integration of oral health promotion into relevant general health promotion programmes for infants, children and adolescents; and,
4. the role of families, communities, schools, the public health service, the dental hospitals, and governmental and other agencies in promoting child oral health and welfare.



### The first dental visit

The Association values:

1. oral health promotion and disease prevention beginning with the first visit to a dentist by the age of one year and at least annually thereafter;
2. the inclusion of oral health promotion by public health nurses during infant and child developmental visits; and,
3. the early diagnosis by dentists of caries in very young children (early childhood caries) and recommends early management of this disease and treatment when indicated or referral to a paediatric dentist where appropriate.