

## **Hertfordshire Bites Back to Reduce Tooth Decay in Under 5's**

Dear parents and carers,

**Did you know . . . nearly a quarter of 5 year-olds in England have tooth decay?** And that tooth extraction is also the most common reason for hospital admission for children aged 6 to 10? Children from more deprived backgrounds are also more likely to have tooth decay.

Working together, Hertfordshire Family Centre Services and Hertfordshire County Council are improving the oral health of vulnerable under 5's, preventing tooth decay, improving oral hygiene and promoting healthy eating.

Hertfordshire Family Centre Services recognise that the emerging needs and now offer an oral health pathway for children in need of this. This pathway has been identified by Public Health Nursing, their GP or dentist, their school or Early Years Provider. Referrals can be made by parents or carers via the [referral portal](#) and will be picked up by one of the Emerging Needs team.

The team will work with the family along one of three pathways (below) which best meets the child's needs:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Children under age 2.</b> One to one support providing information and resources together with a place on a targeted course such as Little Chefs or Little Learners.	<b>Children between 2 and 5 years.</b> One to one support providing information and resources together with a place on a targeted course such as Little Chefs or Young Explorers.	<b>Individualised</b> one to one support for the family;  Suitable for children in full time education

For all pathways, families will be helped to find and attend an NHS dentist.

Hertfordshire Healthy Mouths programme distributes oral health packs (a toothbrush, toothpaste, timer, oral health leaflet) to vulnerable families with children under 5. They do this through Health Visitors at the two-year old development checks and key Family Centre networks and case lists. Oral health packs are also now being distributed to foodbanks and those in temporary accommodation.

For more parenting advice, information and resources please visit <https://thegrid.org.uk/health-and-infection/public-health-communications/oral-health-in-the-early-years>

I hope you find this sharing of information useful.

Kind regards,

**Netta Costanzo**

**Assistant Headteacher & SENDCo - Inclusion Lead**