

Supervised Toothbrushing (STB) Programme – Information for Early Years Settings and Primary Schools (Reception year)

Dear Colleagues,

We greatly appreciate your ongoing commitment to supporting children's development and wellbeing. With this in mind, we are pleased to share an update on an important public health initiative designed to promote children's oral health and overall development — the **Supervised Toothbrushing (STB) Programme**.

About the Supervised Toothbrushing Programme

The STB Programme is a national initiative led by the Department of Health and Social Care in partnership with the Department for Education. It aims to address the high prevalence of tooth decay among young children, particularly in areas where oral health outcomes are poorest.

The programme targets children aged 3–5 years and involves supervised daily toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste in early years settings and schools. This activity complements, rather than replaces, toothbrushing at home. Participating children will also receive a toothbrush and toothpaste to take home each term. Evidence shows that this simple, consistent routine can significantly reduce tooth decay.

Why This Matters

Oral health remains a significant concern for young children in Birmingham, especially in our most disadvantaged communities. Currently, over 25% of five-year-olds in the city have experienced tooth decay. This can lead to pain, disrupted sleep, reduced self-esteem, and missed time from school or nursery — as well as time off work for parents.

By participating in the STB Programme, your setting will play a vital role in reducing health inequalities and improving long-term health outcomes for children.

Programme Rollout in Birmingham

Birmingham City Council has secured funding to implement the STB Programme across targeted early years settings and Reception classes in primary schools. The first deliveries of toothbrush packs are expected in **September 2025**, with the programme launching in selected settings during the **autumn term**. The rollout will be phased over several years.

We are currently finalising delivery plans to ensure the programme is introduced in a way that is practical, sustainable, and supportive for all involved.

How the Programme Will Work

- The activity supports the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** requirements, particularly in promoting health and self-care.
- Targeted settings will be contacted directly by the Public Health team or a designated representative.
- **Face-to-face training and support** will be provided to ensure staff feel confident in delivering the programme.
- All necessary **resources and materials** will be supplied.
- Daily brushing will be supervised by a member of staff — this does not need to be a teacher.
- Ongoing support will be available, including a dedicated point of contact for any queries.
- We will follow up after implementation to provide additional guidance and address any challenges.

See the Programme in Action

To get a sense of what supervised toothbrushing looks like in practice, please watch this short video:

[Brilliant brushers - final on Vimeo](#)



Contact

We understand that introducing new routines can be challenging, especially during busy periods. Our aim is to make this process as smooth and supportive as possible — you will not be doing this alone.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the **Birmingham City Council Health Protection Team** at:

hpteam@birmingham.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued dedication to helping children grow, thrive, and stay healthy.

Warm regards,
Birmingham Public Health Team

