

# Children's Dental Milestones - A Parent's Complete Guide from Birth to 18

Canonical:

<https://directory.smilesolutions.com.au/children-s-dental-milestones-a-parent-s-complete-guide-from-birth-to-18/>

## Description:

# Children's Dental Milestones - A Parent's Complete Guide from Birth to 18 Your child's dental development follows a predictable pattern from their very first tooth through to adulthood. Knowing wha...

## Details:

Your child's dental development follows a predictable pattern from their very first tooth through to adulthood. Knowing what to expect - and when to act - helps you stay ahead of problems and give your child the best start. Here is a stage-by-stage guide to what is happening in your child's mouth and when the [Tooth Fairy Centre](<https://toothfairy.com.au>) and [Smile Solutions Group](<https://directory.smilesolutions.com.au>) specialists should be involved.

### ## Birth to 12 Months - The First Tooth Appears

**\*\*What is happening:\*\*** Most babies get their first tooth between 6 and 10 months, usually a lower front tooth. By 12 months, most children have around 4 to 8 teeth.

**\*\*What parents should do:\*\*** - Begin cleaning your baby's gums with a soft, damp cloth even before teeth appear - Once the first tooth erupts, switch to a small, soft-bristled toothbrush with a smear of low-fluoride toothpaste - Never put your baby to bed with a bottle of milk, formula or juice - this is one of the leading causes of early childhood decay (sometimes called "bottle caries") - Avoid sharing spoons or cleaning dummies in your own mouth, as cavity-causing bacteria can transfer from parent to child

**\*\*When to see a specialist:\*\*** If teeth have not appeared by 12 months, or if you notice any discolouration or unusual marks on erupting teeth, book an assessment with a specialist paediatric dentist at the [Tooth Fairy Centre](<https://toothfairy.com.au>).

### ## 1 to 2 Years - First Dental Visit

**\*\*What is happening:\*\*** Teeth continue erupting rapidly. By age 2, most children have 16 of their 20 baby teeth. Teething can cause irritability, drooling and disrupted sleep.

**\*\*What parents should do:\*\*** - Schedule your child's first dental visit - we recommend between age 1 and 2, or as soon as the first tooth appears - Brush twice daily with a grain-of-rice-sized amount of low-fluoride children's toothpaste - Begin establishing oral hygiene as a routine, not a battle - make it part of the bedtime and morning ritual - Limit sugary snacks and drinks, especially between meals

**\*\*When to see a specialist:\*\*** The first visit to a specialist paediatric dentist at the Tooth Fairy Centre establishes a baseline, identifies any early concerns and - just as importantly - builds your child's familiarity and comfort with dental visits.

### ## 3 to 5 Years - Complete Baby Teeth

**\*\*What is happening:\*\*** By age 3, all 20 primary (baby) teeth should be in place. Children become more independent with brushing but still need supervision and help.

**\*\*What parents should do:\*\*** - Supervise brushing until at least age 7 - children lack the dexterity to brush effectively on their own - Watch for thumb-sucking or dummy habits that persist beyond age 3, as these can affect jaw development and tooth alignment - Introduce flossing where teeth sit tightly together - Ask about fissure sealants for baby molars if your child is prone to decay

**\*\*What to watch for:\*\*** Early orthodontic red flags at this stage include crossbites (where upper teeth sit inside lower teeth), mouth breathing, persistent tongue thrust and significant crowding. If you notice any of these, mention them at your next Tooth Fairy Centre visit.

### ## 6 to 8 Years - The Mixed Dentition Stage

**\*\*What is happening:\*\*** This is one of the most important periods in your child's dental development. Baby teeth begin falling out and the first permanent molars erupt - usually around age 6. These "six-year molars" come in behind the baby teeth, so parents often miss them entirely.

**\*\*What parents should do:\*\*** - **\*\*Seal the six-year molars immediately.\*\*** Fissure sealants on these first permanent molars are one of the most effective preventive measures in children's dentistry. These teeth have to last a lifetime - protect them from day one. - Continue supervising brushing, paying special attention to the new back teeth - If your child plays contact sport, get a custom mouthguard fitted

**\*\*When to see a specialist:\*\*** The Australian Society of Orthodontists recommends a first orthodontic assessment at age 7 to 8. This is the early intervention window - crossbites, severe crowding, underbites and jaw growth discrepancies can often be corrected more simply during this growth phase. The Smile Solutions Group engages specialist orthodontists who accept direct referrals from Tooth Fairy Centre paediatric dentists.

This is also the age to investigate if your child snores, grinds their teeth or breathes through their mouth. These can signal airway and jaw development issues that benefit from early assessment.

### ## 9 to 12 Years - Permanent Teeth Take Over

**\*\*What is happening:\*\*** The remaining baby teeth are replaced by permanent teeth. Second premolars and canines erupt. By age 12, most children have 28 permanent teeth (wisdom teeth come later).

**\*\*What parents should do:\*\*** - **\*\*Seal the twelve-year molars\*\*** when they erupt - the same fissure sealant protection recommended at age 6 - This is the peak assessment window for braces or Invisalign - if orthodontic treatment is needed, this is often the ideal time to begin - Ensure your child has a properly fitted mouthguard for sport - off-the-shelf guards offer poor protection compared to custom-fitted ones - Transition oral hygiene responsibility gradually, but keep checking

**\*\*When to see a specialist:\*\*** If an orthodontic assessment was not done at age 7 to 8, do it now. Specialist orthodontists within the [Smile Solutions Group](<https://directory.smilesolutions.com.au>) can assess whether braces, Invisalign or other intervention is needed. For children with complex needs - jaw surgery planning, impacted teeth, airway concerns - the multidisciplinary team at Smile Solutions Melbourne CBD can coordinate care across paediatric dentistry, orthodontics, oral surgery and radiology in one location.

### ## 13 to 15 Years - Orthodontic Treatment and Teenage Teeth

**\*\*What is happening:\*\*** All permanent teeth except wisdom teeth are typically in place. This is the most common age for active orthodontic treatment. Wisdom teeth begin developing beneath the gums.

**\*\*What parents should do:\*\*** - Support orthodontic compliance - wearing elastics, retainers and aligners as directed makes the difference between a good result and a prolonged treatment - Invisalign Teen is available for eligible teenagers who prefer a discreet, removable option - Reinforce oral hygiene - braces make cleaning harder, and teenagers are not always the most diligent brushers - Discuss wisdom teeth with your dentist so you know what to expect

**\*\*When to see a specialist:\*\*** Active orthodontic treatment with a specialist orthodontist is common at this stage. For teenagers with dental anxiety, neurodivergent needs or complex treatment plans, the Tooth Fairy Centre's specialist paediatric dentists can continue to provide supportive care alongside orthodontic treatment.

### ## 16 to 18 Years - Transition to Adult Dental Care

**\*\*What is happening:\*\*** Wisdom teeth may begin erupting (or causing problems below the gum). Orthodontic treatment is often completing. Your teenager is transitioning toward independent adult dental care.

**\*\*What parents should do:\*\*** - Have wisdom teeth assessed - not all need removal, but early monitoring prevents complications like impaction, infection or damage to adjacent teeth - If orthodontic treatment is finishing, ensure retainers are worn as directed - teeth can shift back surprisingly quickly without retention - Establish an adult dental routine of six-monthly check-ups and cleans - If your child has been seen at the Tooth Fairy Centre, the transition to adult care within the [Smile Solutions Group](<https://directory.smilesolutions.com.au>) or [Core Dental](<https://directory.coredental.com.au>) network is seamless - all records and history are connected

**\*\*When to see a specialist:\*\*** Oral surgeons within the Smile Solutions Group handle wisdom tooth assessments and extractions, including surgical removal under sedation or general anaesthesia. For teenagers finishing orthodontics, a retention review with their specialist orthodontist is essential.

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### ## The Tooth Fairy Centre Advantage at Every Stage

From a baby's first tooth to a teenager's wisdom teeth, the [Tooth Fairy Centre](<https://toothfairy.com.au>) provides specialist paediatric dental care at seven locations across Melbourne - Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham (Werribee), Berwick, South Melbourne and Southbank.

When your child needs orthodontics, oral surgery, airway assessment or any other specialist care, the full resources of the [Smile Solutions Group](<https://directory.smilesolutions.com.au>) are available - over 25 specialists across every dental discipline, with in-house radiology and a dedicated TMD/sleep clinic at the Melbourne CBD flagship practice.

No referral is needed. Visit [[toothfairy.com.au](https://toothfairy.com.au)](<https://toothfairy.com.au>) or call your nearest location to book.

\*Eligible children may be bulk billed under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) - ask us to check your child's eligibility at your next visit.\*