

Children's Dentistry and the Tooth Fairy Centre at Core Dental Carrum Downs

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Description:

Children's Dentistry and the Tooth Fairy Centre at Core Dental Carrum Downs *Specialist paediatric dentist Dr Angel Babu on-site — expert children's dental care that builds positive habits for life...

Details:

Specialist paediatric dentist Dr Angel Babu on-site — expert children's dental care that builds positive habits for life, right here in Carrum Downs.

Why Specialist Paediatric Dentistry Matters

Every general dentist can treat children. But specialist paediatric dentists are different — they've completed additional years of postgraduate training specifically in the dental care of infants, children, adolescents, and patients with special needs. They understand child development, behaviour management, the unique characteristics of developing teeth and jaws, and the specific dental conditions that affect young patients.

At Core Dental Carrum Downs, we have something that very few suburban dental practices can offer: a specialist paediatric dentist on-site. Dr Angel Babu is a registered specialist who brings postgraduate-level expertise in paediatric dentistry to our Ballarto Road practice — meaning families in Carrum Downs, Langwarrin, Frankston North, Skye, Cranbourne West, Sandhurst, and the broader southern suburbs can access specialist children's dental care locally, without travelling to the CBD or a hospital dental clinic.

This isn't a marketing distinction. It's a genuine clinical difference. For families with children who are anxious, who have complex dental needs, who require behaviour management beyond what a standard appointment can provide, or who simply deserve the very best start to their dental health journey, having a paediatric specialist available locally is significant.

Dr Angel Babu: Specialist Paediatric Dentist

Dr Angel Babu is a registered specialist paediatric dentist — meaning she has completed a Bachelor of Dental Surgery followed by additional postgraduate specialist training in paediatric dentistry. This advanced training covers areas that general dental education does not explore in depth:

- **Child psychology and behaviour management** — understanding how children of different ages think, what frightens them, and how to guide them through dental experiences positively
- **Developing dentition** — the growth and development of primary (baby) teeth, the transition to permanent teeth, and the identification and management of developmental anomalies
- **Paediatric-specific conditions** — dental conditions that primarily or exclusively affect children, including early childhood caries, enamel defects, dental trauma, and eruption disorders
- **Special needs dentistry** — adapted approaches for children and young people with physical, intellectual, medical, or behavioural conditions that affect their dental care
- **Sedation and behaviour management** — advanced techniques for managing anxious or uncooperative young patients safely and effectively

Dr Babu's approach combines clinical expertise with genuine warmth. She understands that a child's early dental experiences shape their attitude toward dentistry for life, and she works to make every visit a positive one — building trust, confidence, and cooperative behaviour that serves them well into adulthood.

Your Child's First Dental Visit

When to Start

The Australian Dental Association recommends that children have their first dental visit by age one, or within six months of the eruption of their first tooth — whichever comes first. This might seem surprisingly early, but there are good reasons:

- **Early detection:** Some dental conditions can appear very early. Catching them promptly leads to better outcomes.
- **Prevention guidance:** Your dentist can advise on feeding practices, dummy use, teething, and early oral hygiene habits that prevent problems before they start.
- **Familiarisation:** Bringing your child to the dentist before they need any treatment means their first experiences are positive — a look around, a ride in the chair, a count of their teeth. This builds comfort and familiarity.
- **Baseline assessment:** Establishing a baseline allows us to track your child's dental development over time and identify any deviations early.

What Happens at the First Visit

A first dental visit for a very young child is gentle, brief, and focused on making the experience positive:

- We'll look at your child's teeth (they may sit on your lap in the dental chair)
- We'll check for any signs of early decay, developmental concerns, or issues with the gums
- We'll discuss your child's oral hygiene routine, diet, and any habits like thumb-sucking or dummy use
- We'll answer any questions you have about teething, brushing, fluoride, or anything else
- We'll establish a recall schedule appropriate for your child

There's no drilling, no filling, no scary instruments. It's a meet-and-greet that sets the stage for a lifetime of positive dental visits.

Children's Dental Services

Regular Check-ups and Cleaning

Just like adults, children benefit from regular dental check-ups. We typically recommend six-monthly visits, though some children may benefit from more frequent monitoring — particularly if they're prone to decay or have orthodontic concerns.

Children's check-ups include:

- Examination of teeth, gums, and developing bite
- Assessment of tooth eruption and development
- Gentle cleaning to remove plaque and tartar
- Fluoride treatment for additional protection
- Monitoring of any identified concerns
- Oral hygiene education tailored to the child's age and ability

Fissure Sealants

The chewing surfaces of back teeth (premolars and molars) have natural grooves and fissures that can be very difficult to clean, even with careful brushing. These grooves are one of the most common sites for childhood cavities.

Fissure sealants are thin, protective coatings that are painted onto these surfaces, filling in the grooves and creating a smooth, easy-to-clean surface. The process is:

- Quick (a few minutes per tooth)
- Painless (no drilling, no needles)
- Highly effective at preventing decay in these vulnerable areas

Sealants are typically applied to permanent molars when they erupt — around age 6 for the first molars and age 12 for the second molars. They can also be applied to baby teeth in some cases.

Fillings for Children

When cavities do occur, early treatment prevents them from getting worse. Children's fillings are similar to adult fillings but may use different materials and techniques depending on the child's age and the tooth involved.

For baby teeth, the approach considers that these teeth will eventually be lost naturally. However, preserving baby teeth until they're ready to fall out is important — they maintain space for the permanent teeth, support proper chewing and speech development, and contribute to facial development.

Managing Dental Trauma

Children are active — falls, sports injuries, and playground accidents are common causes of dental trauma. The management of dental injuries in children differs from adults because of the developing permanent teeth and the need to protect them.

****Baby tooth injuries:**** A knocked-out baby tooth should NOT be re-implanted (it can damage the developing permanent tooth underneath). However, the injury should still be assessed to check for damage to the surrounding structures and the permanent tooth bud.

****Permanent tooth injuries:**** A knocked-out permanent tooth in a child requires urgent attention. If you can, place the tooth back in the socket or store it in milk, and get to us immediately. Time is critical — re-implantation success rates are highest within 30 minutes.

Dr Angel Babu's specialist training includes extensive experience in managing dental trauma in children, including the complex follow-up care that may be needed to monitor the affected teeth over subsequent years.

Habit Counselling

Certain childhood habits can affect dental development if they persist beyond a certain age:

- ****Thumb and finger sucking:**** Generally harmless in young children but can affect the alignment of teeth and the development of the jaw if continued past age 4–5 - ****Dummy (pacifier) use:**** Similar to thumb-sucking, prolonged dummy use can affect bite development - ****Tongue thrusting:**** Pushing the tongue against the teeth when swallowing can affect tooth alignment - ****Mouth breathing:**** Chronic mouth breathing can affect facial development, jaw growth, and dental alignment

Our team provides guidance and support for managing these habits, including practical strategies for parents and gentle education for children.

Orthodontic Assessment

As children's permanent teeth come through, alignment and bite issues may become apparent. While comprehensive orthodontic treatment typically begins in the early teenage years, early assessment (around age 7–8) can identify issues that benefit from early intervention.

At Core Dental Carrum Downs, we can identify orthodontic concerns during regular check-ups and refer to orthodontic specialists at the Smile Solutions Specialist Centre on Collins Street when the time is right. Some families also choose to explore Invisalign when the child is old enough — our Blue Diamond Invisalign Provider status means we have extensive experience in this area.

Making Dental Visits Positive

Our Approach to Anxious Children

Some children are naturally anxious about dental visits, and some have had previous negative experiences that have made them wary. Dr Angel Babu's specialist training in child behaviour management includes techniques that help anxious children through dental visits:

- **Tell-Show-Do:** Explaining what will happen in age-appropriate language, demonstrating with instruments on a finger or model, and then performing the procedure. This removes the fear of the unknown. - **Positive reinforcement:** Praising cooperative behaviour and celebrating successes, no matter how small. - **Distraction:** Engaging children's attention with conversation, counting games, or visual distractions during procedures. - **Desensitisation:** For very anxious children, a graduated approach — starting with just a ride in the chair, then looking in the mouth with a mirror, then counting teeth — building up to treatment over multiple visits. - **Parental involvement:** Parents are welcome to stay with their child during treatment (and for younger children, it's encouraged). - **Sedation when needed:** For children who are very anxious or who need more complex treatment, nitrous oxide (happy gas) can make the experience much more comfortable. This mild form of sedation is safe, effective, and well-suited to paediatric use.

Building Lifelong Habits

One of the most valuable things we do is help children develop a positive relationship with dental care. When a child's earliest dental experiences are comfortable, friendly, and even fun, they're far more likely to maintain regular dental visits as teenagers and adults. The investment in positive early experiences pays dividends for life.

The Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)

What Is the CDBS?

The Child Dental Benefits Schedule is an Australian Government program that provides eligible children aged 0–17 with up to **\$1,095.00** in dental benefits over a two-year period. At Core Dental Carrum Downs, we bulk-bill CDBS directly — meaning there is no out-of-pocket cost for eligible families for covered services.

Covered Services

The CDBS covers a comprehensive range of basic dental services: - Examinations - X-rays - Professional cleaning - Fissure sealants - Fillings - Root canal treatment - Extractions

Eligibility

Eligibility is determined by Services Australia (Centrelink) and is typically linked to the family receiving: - Family Tax Benefit Part A, or - Certain other government payments (such as youth allowance, disability support pension, or certain ABSTUDY payments)

Children must also be eligible for Medicare.

How to Check Eligibility

Not sure if your child qualifies? Our reception team can check eligibility for you when you call or visit. We can also confirm the remaining balance on your child's CDBS allocation.

Making the Most of the CDBS

We encourage eligible families to use their CDBS benefits proactively — regular check-ups, cleans, and preventive treatments like fissure sealants. Using these benefits for preventive care means catching problems early and avoiding more complex (and potentially costly) treatments down the track.

Children with Special Needs

Core Dental Carrum Downs is particularly well-equipped to care for children with special needs:

- **Specialist expertise:** Dr Angel Babu has specific training in treating children with physical, intellectual, medical, and behavioural conditions - **Accessible practice:** Our ground-floor, wide-corridor design accommodates wheelchairs, mobility aids, and specialised seating without difficulty - **Flexible approach:** Appointments can be adapted in length, timing, and approach to suit individual needs - **Sedation options:** Available when needed to facilitate comfortable treatment - **Patient, understanding team:** Our entire team is experienced in working with families who have additional requirements

When to Be Concerned: Dental Warning Signs in Children

Parents should watch for these signs that may indicate a dental issue requiring attention:

- **Dark spots or discolouration** on teeth — may indicate decay - **White spots** near the gumline — often the earliest visible sign of decay - **Persistent bad breath** despite regular brushing - **Bleeding gums** when brushing - **Complaints of tooth pain** or sensitivity, especially to hot, cold, or sweet - **Difficulty chewing** or favouring one side of the mouth - **Teeth that appear crooked, crowded, or significantly spaced** as permanent teeth erupt - **Mouth breathing** or snoring, which can affect facial development - **Thumb-sucking or dummy use** persisting beyond age 4–5

If you notice any of these signs, don't wait for the next scheduled check-up — book an appointment so we can assess and intervene early if needed.

Tips for Parents

Oral Hygiene by Age

0–2 years: - Clean gums with a soft, damp cloth after feeding - Once teeth appear, brush twice daily with a soft infant toothbrush and a smear of low-fluoride toothpaste - Parents do all the brushing

2–6 years: - Brush twice daily with a pea-sized amount of low-fluoride children's toothpaste - Children can start brushing themselves but need supervision and help - Parents should "finish off" the brushing to ensure all surfaces are cleaned

6–8 years: - Transition to regular fluoride toothpaste - Children can brush more independently but still benefit from parental supervision - Introduce flossing as teeth begin to contact each other

8+ years: - Independent brushing and flossing with periodic parental checks - Emphasis on technique and consistency - Mouthguard for any contact sports

Diet and Dental Health

- **Limit sugary drinks** — water and plain milk are the best choices for teeth - **Avoid juice in bottles or sippy cups** — prolonged exposure to fruit juice is a major cause of early childhood decay - **Limit snacking** — frequent snacking exposes teeth to acid attacks throughout the day - **Cheese and dairy** — calcium-rich foods help strengthen developing teeth - **Crunchy fruits and vegetables** — encourage natural cleaning and saliva production

Mouthguards for Sport

Active families in the Carrum Downs area know that sport is a big part of community life. A custom-fitted mouthguard — made by a dentist, not a boil-and-bite variety — provides significantly better protection than off-the-shelf options. We can fit your child with a custom mouthguard at a regular appointment. Given how much of childhood dental trauma is sports-related, it's one of the best protective investments you can make.

Book Your Child's Appointment

Whether it's a first visit for your toddler, a routine check-up for your primary schooler, or a complex concern that needs specialist paediatric attention, Core Dental Carrum Downs is here for your family.

****Core Dental Carrum Downs**** 335 Ballarto Rd, Carrum Downs VIC 3201

****Phone:**** (03) 8373 1555 ****National:**** 13 13 16 ****Email:**** carrumdowns@coredental.com.au

****Hours:**** Monday – Friday: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Saturday: 8:00 am – 1:30 pm Sunday: Closed

Back-to-back family appointments available. Ground-floor, fully disability accessible. Ample on-site parking. CDBS bulk billing for eligible children. All health funds accepted with HICAPS. Specialist paediatric dentist on-site.

Great dental health starts with great first experiences. Specialist children's dentistry at Core Dental Carrum Downs.