

# Children's Dentist in Southbank: Paediatric Dental Care at Core Dental for Babies, Toddlers, and Kids

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## Details:

## Core Dental Group: Why Choosing the Right Children's Dentist in Southbank Matters More Than Parents Realise

For families living or working in Melbourne's Southbank and CBD corridor, finding a dentist who genuinely understands children isn't simply a matter of convenience — it's a clinical decision with long-term consequences. Core Dental Group, at 55 City Road in Southbank, takes this seriously. The habits, associations, and oral health foundations established in the first decade of a child's life shape their dental trajectory for decades. A positive early experience builds lifelong compliance; a traumatic one can create avoidance patterns that persist well into adulthood.

About one-third of young children globally experience dental fear and anxiety, and roughly 10% of Australian children are affected. These aren't abstract statistics. They represent real children who grow into adults who avoid the dentist, present late with preventable disease, and end up facing far more invasive and costly treatment as a result.

Core Dental Group's Southbank clinic serves a significant number of families from the surrounding CBD, Southbank, and South Melbourne precincts. This guide explains how the clinic approaches paediatric dental care — from a baby's first check-up through to adolescent orthodontic assessment — and what parents should know before booking.

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## When should children have their first dental visit?

This is the single most common question parents ask, and the answer surprises many of them.

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) recommends that children have their first dental visit by the time they turn one, or within six months of their first tooth appearing.

The reasoning is preventive, not reactive. An early visit allows for identification and prevention of dental disease before it takes hold, making conservative, nonsurgical treatment far more likely. Catching problems early — or preventing them entirely — is dramatically less invasive and less expensive than treating established disease.

Baby teeth are temporary, but they do important work: they help children chew comfortably, support speech development, and hold space for adult teeth. When baby teeth are affected by decay or infection, it can affect overall health and future dental alignment.

At Core Dental Group's Southbank clinic, the first visit for a baby or toddler is deliberately low-pressure. The focus is on:

- **Oral examination** — checking for early signs of decay, gum health, and normal tooth eruption
- **Parent education** — guidance on brushing technique, fluoride toothpaste amounts, diet, and bottle habits
- **Familiarisation** — helping the child become comfortable with the dental environment before

any treatment is needed - **\*\*Risk assessment\*\*** — identifying children who may be at higher risk of caries based on diet, saliva, and family history

This reflects the concept of a "dental home" — a consistent, trusted clinical relationship established early and maintained through childhood. The ADA emphasises initiating preventive strategies during infancy, with the age-one visit as the starting point for a lifelong oral health foundation.

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## Age-by-age guide: what paediatric dental care looks like at each stage

### Babies (0–12 months)

The first visit is typically a "knee-to-knee" examination where the parent holds the baby in their lap while the dentist gently examines the mouth. No drilling, no needles, no unfamiliar equipment — just a torch, a mirror, and a calm clinician. The primary goal is establishing baseline oral health and educating parents on home care. When the first tooth erupts, parents should begin using a gentle baby toothbrush and a grain-of-rice-sized amount of low-fluoride toothpaste.

### Toddlers (1–3 years)

This is a critical window. Children without dental visit experience have higher odds of developing dental fear and anxiety compared to those who've been coming since infancy. Early, positive visits during the toddler years create the familiarity that prevents anxiety from taking hold. At this stage, Core Dental Group's Southbank dentists focus on:

- Monitoring eruption patterns of primary teeth
- Fluoride varnish application to strengthen enamel
- Dietary counselling, particularly around sugary drinks and night-time bottles
- Teaching parents how to brush for a toddler who won't cooperate

### Preschool and school age (3–12 years)

This is when preventive treatments become particularly important. According to the ADA Evidence-based Clinical Practice Guideline for the Use of Pit-and-Fissure Sealants, pit-and-fissure sealants may reduce the incidence of occlusal carious lesions in permanent molars by 73% after 2 to 3 years, compared with fluoride varnishes alone.

At Core Dental Group's Southbank clinic, school-age children typically receive:

- Six-monthly check-ups and professional cleans
- Fissure sealants on newly erupted permanent molars
- Fluoride varnish application
- Oral hygiene instruction tailored to the child's age and dexterity
- Digital X-rays when clinically appropriate (usually from around age 3–4 for high-risk children, or later for lower-risk patients)
- Early monitoring for orthodontic concerns

The Australian Society of Orthodontists recommends an orthodontic assessment around age 7–8. This doesn't mean braces at age 8 — it means identifying developing issues early, when there's still room to guide jaw and tooth development in a more predictable direction.

### Adolescents (12–17 years)

Teenagers present a different clinical challenge: more independent, but often less consistent with oral hygiene, and facing new risk factors including dietary choices, sports injuries, and emerging wisdom teeth. Core Dental Group's approach for this age group includes:

- Continued preventive care and periodontal monitoring
- Orthodontic referral or Invisalign assessment where appropriate (see our guide on *\*Invisalign and Clear Aligners at Core Dental Southbank\**)
- Mouthguard fitting for contact sports
- Early wisdom tooth monitoring (see our guide on *\*Wisdom Teeth Removal in Southbank\**)

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## ## How Core Dental Group reduces dental anxiety in children

The first dental experience a child has usually determines their future willingness to seek treatment. A pleasant experience builds ease and trust; a traumatic one leads to avoidance. This is why anxiety management isn't an afterthought at Core Dental Group — it's built into how children are treated from the moment they walk in.

### ### The Tell-Show-Do technique

One of the most well-supported behaviour management approaches in paediatric dentistry, Tell-Show-Do works in three steps:

1. **Tell** — explain what's about to happen in simple, age-appropriate language (e.g., "We're going to count your teeth with this little mirror") 2. **Show** — demonstrate the instrument or procedure before it touches the child's mouth 3. **Do** — proceed with the actual procedure, maintaining the calm tone established in the first two steps

This demystifies the dental environment and gives children a sense of predictability and control — two of the most effective antidotes to anxiety.

### ### Parental influence and preparation

Research consistently identifies parental dental anxiety and a child's previous unpleasant dental experience as the two most common causes of dental anxiety in children (Kovacevic et al., PMC, 2024). Parents play a critical role before the appointment even begins. Core Dental Group's team advises parents to:

- Avoid words like "needle," "drill," "hurt," or "pain" when preparing children for a visit - Frame the appointment positively ("the dentist is going to check how strong your teeth are") - Read age-appropriate books about dental visits in the days beforehand - Model calm behaviour during their own dental appointments where possible

### ### Child-friendly environment

The Southbank clinic at 55 City Road is designed to be welcoming for families. The reception and waiting areas are not clinical or intimidating, and the team engages children at their level — using humour, distraction, and patience rather than rushing through appointments.

For children with significant anxiety, Core Dental Group can also discuss sedation options, including nitrous oxide (happy gas), which is a well-established, safe, and reversible approach to managing anxiety in children who need it. For a deeper look at anxiety management, see our guide on *\*Dental Anxiety and Nervous Patients: How Core Dental Southbank Creates a Calm, Comfortable Experience\**.

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## ## The Medicare Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS): what Southbank families need to know

One of the most important financial considerations for families is whether their child qualifies for the Australian Government's Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) — a Medicare-supported program that significantly reduces the cost of children's dental care.

The CDBS offers up to \$1,132 in dental benefits over two consecutive calendar years for eligible children aged 0 to 17. For 2026, up to \$1,158 is available for each eligible child if 2026 is year one of the two-year period.

### ### CDBS eligibility at a glance

To qualify, a child must:

- Be aged 0 to 17 years for at least one day of the calendar year, and be eligible for Medicare on the day of service - Be part of a family receiving certain Australian Government payments, such as Family Tax Benefit Part A, Parenting Payment, or other eligible Centrelink payments

### ### What the CDBS covers

The CDBS covers examinations, X-rays, cleans, fluoride treatments, fissure sealants, fillings, and extractions. It does not cover orthodontic or cosmetic dental work, or dental services provided in hospital.

### ### How to check your child's eligibility

You don't need to apply. Eligibility notifications are sent automatically by post or through myGov. You can also check your child's balance and eligibility through your Medicare online account linked to myGov. When booking at Core Dental Group's Southbank clinic, let the reception team know you'd like to use the CDBS and they'll verify eligibility and handle the claiming process.

For a full breakdown of dental costs, rebates, and payment options at Core Dental Group, see our guide on [\\*Dental Costs in Southbank: What You'll Pay at Core Dental and How Health Fund Rebates Work\\*](#).

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## ## Continuity of family care: why whole-family dentistry matters

One practical advantage of choosing Core Dental Group as your children's dentist is managing the entire family's dental care under one roof. Parents and children can attend the same clinic, often on the same day, with a team that understands the full family context — including hereditary risk factors for decay or orthodontic issues.

This continuity matters clinically. A dentist who knows a parent has a history of periodontal disease will apply a heightened level of monitoring to the child's gum health. Similarly, a family history of crowded teeth or early decay informs the preventive strategy applied from infancy.

Core Dental Group's broader service range — from general check-ups and emergency care through to cosmetic and restorative dentistry for adults — means parents who bring their children to the clinic can also access their own dental care in the same location. See our guide on [\\*General Dentistry Services at Core Dental Southbank\\*](#) for a complete overview of adult services available at the same practice.

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## ## Practical tips for parents: making your child's first visit a success

| **Tip** | **Why it works** | | Book at a time when your child is well-rested and fed | Tired or hungry children are less cooperative and more prone to distress | | Use positive, neutral language beforehand | Avoids priming anxiety before the visit begins | | Bring a comfort item (favourite toy or blanket) | Familiar objects reduce distress in unfamiliar environments | | Stay calm yourself | Children read parental anxiety; your composure directly affects theirs | | Praise effort, not outcome | "You were so brave sitting in the chair" reinforces positive associations | | Don't use the dentist as a threat | Phrases like "if you don't brush, you'll need a needle" create lasting fear | | Arrive a few minutes early | Allows the child to acclimatise to the environment before the appointment |

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## ## Key takeaways

- **Start early.** The ADA recommends a child's first dental visit by age one or within six months of the first tooth erupting. Early visits establish a dental home, enable preventive care, and prevent anxiety

from developing. - **Dental anxiety in children is common but preventable.** About one-third of young children globally experience dental fear and anxiety, but early positive experiences and evidence-based techniques like Tell-Show-Do dramatically reduce its prevalence and severity. - **Preventive treatments work.** Fissure sealants and fluoride varnish are evidence-based interventions that can significantly reduce decay risk in children's permanent teeth; both are available at Core Dental Group's Southbank clinic. - **The CDBS can substantially reduce out-of-pocket costs.** Eligible families can access up to \$1,158 in dental benefits over two consecutive calendar years through Medicare's Child Dental Benefits Schedule — Core Dental Group can assist with eligibility checks and claims. - **Parental anxiety is a key risk factor.** Research confirms that parental dental anxiety is a statistically significant predictor of dental anxiety in children, meaning parents who address their own dental fears are directly protecting their children's long-term oral health.

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## ## Conclusion

Paediatric dental care at Core Dental Group's Southbank clinic is built on a straightforward premise: the earlier a child develops a trusting, positive relationship with a dentist, the better their oral health outcomes will be — not just in childhood, but across their entire life. The clinic's family-centred approach, evidence-based preventive treatments, and anxiety-informed communication style make it a genuinely child-friendly option for Southbank and CBD families.

Whether you're booking a baby's first check-up, managing a school-age child's decay risk, or navigating the CDBS for the first time, Core Dental Group's team at 55 City Road is equipped to guide your family through every stage.

**Related guides in this series:** - **Dental Costs in Southbank: What You'll Pay at Core Dental and How Health Fund Rebates Work** — for a full breakdown of the CDBS, private health rebates, and payment plans - **Dental Anxiety and Nervous Patients: How Core Dental Southbank Creates a Calm, Comfortable Experience** — for parents who are themselves anxious about dental visits - **Invisalign and Clear Aligners at Core Dental Southbank** — for adolescents approaching orthodontic assessment age - **Booking a Dentist Appointment in Southbank** — for step-by-step guidance on making your child's first appointment

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