Specialist Paediatric Dentists at Core Dental | Core Dental

Canonical:
https://www.coredental.com.au/childrens-dentistry-at-core-dental-why-we-have-specialist-paediatric-dentists/

Details:

A specialist paediatric dentist is not simply a general dentist who sees many young patients. After a university dental degree, a paediatric specialist completes further years of recognised specialist training focused on the oral health of children and adolescents, and must be registered as a specialist with AHPRA to use the title. At Core Dental we believe children deserve care built around them, which is why several of our Melbourne practices have specialist paediatric dentists on site.

Is a specialist paediatric dentist just a general dentist who treats a lot of children?

No. There is a real difference between a dentist who is comfortable treating children and a dentist who has spent years specialising in exactly that. Most parents do not know this distinction exists, and that is understandable. From the outside, a dental appointment for a child can look much the same whoever is doing it. What happens in the room, how anxiety is handled and how long-term oral health is shaped can vary with the clinician's training and experience. Our general dentists look after many children and families every week, and our specialists are there for children who benefit from additional expertise.

What qualifications does a specialist paediatric dentist need in Australia?

To use the title Specialist Paediatric Dentist in Australia, a dentist must be registered as a specialist with AHPRA, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Specialist registration follows a recognised training pathway after the general dental degree. You can check any practitioner's registration on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au, and we are happy to tell you about the practitioner who will be looking after your child.

What does the additional training cover?

Paediatric specialist training generally covers child psychology and behaviour guidance at a clinical level, how children's teeth develop, how baby (primary) teeth influence the growth of adult teeth, and how to recognise early signs of orthodontic or developmental concerns. It also covers techniques for caring for very anxious children, children with additional needs, and children who need dental work with sedation or a general anaesthetic where it is clinically appropriate.

Why does a child's first dental visit matter?

Many adults who say they are terrified of dentists trace that feeling back to an experience in childhood. The opposite can also be true: adults who feel relaxed and look after their teeth often had early visits that felt safe and positive. When a child's first experiences are calm, gently paced and child-friendly,

they help build trust, not only with their current dentist but with dental care in general. This is why we put so much emphasis on getting children's dentistry right from the start.

Our paediatric team uses an approach the dental profession calls tell-show-do. We explain in child-appropriate language what is going to happen, show the instruments and what they do, and then proceed slowly and reassuringly. It sounds simple, but it takes skill and patience. Many children who arrive anxious can leave feeling settled about the whole visit, though every child is different.

What can you expect at a child's appointment?

For most children, a first visit is about familiarisation. There is no rush to get through a list of procedures. We let your child become comfortable with the room, the sounds, the chair and the clinician. Parents are welcome in the room and encouraged to be part of the experience. Routine check-ups, cleans, fluoride treatments and X-rays are usually straightforward for children who attend regularly, and the dentist will recommend what is suitable for your child's age and risk of decay.

If a child needs fillings, extractions or management of decay, a paediatric specialist is trained to approach these procedures in a way that aims to limit distress and encourage cooperation. Where a child has significant dental needs and there are concerns about managing anxiety in a conventional setting, our paediatric dentists can discuss options such as conscious sedation, or treatment under general anaesthetic where appropriate. These pathways exist because one approach does not suit every child.

Why do baby teeth matter?

A common misconception is that baby teeth do not matter because they will fall out anyway. In fact, primary teeth hold space for adult teeth, guide their eruption, help children eat and speak, and their health can influence the adult teeth forming beneath them. Decay in baby teeth that is left untreated can be painful, can spread, and can affect permanent teeth before they have emerged.

Managing diet, fluoride exposure and cleaning habits in the early years is preventive care that shapes oral health for years to come. Our paediatric specialists work with families on good habits, and they can answer questions about diet, bottles, dummies and the different stages of dental development, with appropriate check-ins along the way.

How do our clinics support your child from childhood onward?

Because Core Dental operates as a connected group across Melbourne, a child who sees a specialist paediatric dentist at one clinic can later be referred within the group to an orthodontist, general dentist or another specialist, with their dental history already on file. That means less repeating of background information and a coordinated team as your child grows from childhood through adolescence. Specialist paediatric dentists work at some of our clinics, including Berwick, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs and Epping. Specialist sessions are limited and can change, so please confirm the next available session when you book. Eligible children aged 0 to 17 may be bulk billed under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule, and we recommend a first visit from around age 2.

How do you plan care for your child?

A helpful first step is to tell us your concerns, any symptoms and what you would like to achieve when you book. Bring relevant medical information and a list of your child's current medicines. The dentist can then examine your child's teeth, gums and bite, request imaging when it is clinically appropriate, and explain which options are suitable.

Ask what the recommended approach is meant to achieve, whether there are reasonable alternatives, what preparation and aftercare involve, and what risks or limitations apply. Time, fees and recovery vary with the diagnosis and the complexity of care, and a written treatment plan helps you understand the stages and payment arrangements before you proceed. Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, breathing or swallowing difficulty, serious facial injury or other life-threatening symptoms.

How can we help?

If you have children and you are looking for a dentist who is trained to see them, we would like to hear from you. Our team can help you choose the clinic and the type of appointment that suits your family, whether that is a general check-up, a visit with a paediatric specialist or a conversation about children's braces and Invisalign . Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Where does paediatric dentistry sit among the recognised specialties?

The answer puts the title on a firm footing, which matters on a page making a claim about why specialist training is worth having.

The Dental Board of Australia recognises thirteen dental specialties in Australia, approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. Paediatric dentistry is one of them. It is therefore a protected area of specialist registration rather than a self-described interest, and a practitioner either holds that registration or does not.

The route into it is the same as for the other specialties. The Board requires that applicants hold a qualification in the specialty, meet all the requirements for general registration as a dentist, and have "completed a minimum of two years general dental practice", which "may be achieved by experience outside Australia, subject to assessment and approval by the Board." A specialist paediatric dentist has therefore worked as a general dentist before specialising, which is part of why the pathway takes as long as it does.

For a qualification obtained overseas and not approved by the Board, paediatric dentistry is among the specialties covered by the Board's qualification equivalence pathway.

Verification does not depend on anything we publish. Ahpra maintains an online register of every dental practitioner in Australia which records current registration status and, for dentists with specialist registration, the specialty concerned. If you want to confirm that the clinician treating your child holds specialist registration in paediatric dentistry, look the name up at ahpra.gov.au.

Source: Dental Board of Australia, Specialist Registration, dentalboard.gov.au (page reviewed 18 March 2025; accessed 3 November 2026).

What will the Child Dental Benefits Schedule not pay for?

Families arriving for specialist paediatric care often assume the federal benefit will carry it. Sometimes it will not, and the exclusions are specific.

Services Australia lists the covered services as check-ups, X-rays, cleaning, fissure sealing, fillings, root canals and extractions. It then names what is not covered: "orthodontic dental work; cosmetic dental work; any dental services in a hospital."

That third exclusion is the one that catches families of young children. Where a child's treatment needs to be carried out in a hospital — which is sometimes the position for very young children, for extensive treatment, or where a general anaesthetic is required — the schedule does not apply to those services at all.

Within the covered list there are further limits. Services Australia warns that "there are some restrictions for basic dental services", and advises families to "check with your dentist if there are any item or time restrictions before starting your service."

The benefit itself is a capped amount over two years rather than an annual allowance: up to $1,158 for each eligible child over 2 calendar years, a cap "indexed yearly on 1 January". That figure is the published amount as at November 2026, so confirm the current amount with Services Australia. If the full amount is not used within the two calendar years, the remainder cannot be carried further — a new two-year period has to begin.

Source: Services Australia, What's covered by the Child Dental Benefits Schedule, servicesaustralia.gov.au (page last updated 1 January 2026; accessed 3 November 2026).

Frequently asked questions

When should my child first see a dentist?

We recommend bringing children for their first dental appointment from around age 2. An early visit lets your child meet the team, get used to the surroundings and have their teeth checked, which can make later visits easier. Your dentist will advise on how often to return.

Can I stay with my child during their appointment?

Yes. Parents are welcome in the room and encouraged to be part of the experience. Seeing you nearby can help a child feel safe, and our team can explain each step to you both so everyone knows what to expect.

What if my child is very anxious about the dentist?

Tell us when you book. Our team uses gentle, child-friendly explanation and a slow pace, and a paediatric dentist can discuss options such as conscious sedation or treatment under general anaesthetic when it is clinically appropriate. The right approach depends on your child and their dental needs.

Does Core Dental bulk bill children's dental care?

Eligible children aged 0 to 17 may be bulk billed under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. Eligibility is set by Medicare, so please check your child's eligibility and ask our team about it when you book.

Which Core Dental clinics have a specialist paediatric dentist?

Specialist paediatric dentists work at some of our clinics, including Berwick, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs and Epping. Availability is limited and can change, so confirm the next available session with the clinic when you book.

Is paediatric dentistry a formally recognised specialty?

Yes. It is one of the thirteen dental specialties in Australia approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council and recognised by the Dental Board of Australia, which means specialist registration in it is a formal status recorded on the Ahpra register.

Does a paediatric specialist need general dentistry experience first?

Yes. The Board's specialist registration requirements include a minimum of two years general dental practice, which may be gained outside Australia subject to the Board's assessment and approval, in addition to meeting all the requirements for general registration as a dentist.

Will the Child Dental Benefits Schedule cover hospital treatment for my child?

No. Services Australia excludes any dental services in a hospital, along with orthodontic and cosmetic dental work. Where a child's treatment has to be carried out in a hospital setting, the schedule does not apply to those services.

Are there limits on how often a covered service can be claimed for my child?

Services Australia advises that there are some restrictions for basic dental services, and recommends checking with your dentist whether any item or time restrictions apply before a service begins.

How do I confirm my child's dentist holds specialist registration?

Look them up on the register Ahpra publishes at ahpra.gov.au. It records a practitioner's current registration status, and for dentists holding specialist registration it records the specialty, so you can confirm paediatric dentistry specifically.

Related services and further reading

Children's dentistry

Paediatric dentistry

When should my child see a paediatric dentist?

Top tips for children's dental hygiene

Child Dental Benefits Schedule and bulk billing

5 tips to help with dental anxiety in children

Children's braces and Invisalign

Why seeing a registered specialist matters

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

Interest-free payment plans, HICAPS on-site claiming, and bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16

Booking	Online at coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside , Glenferrie

This article is general in nature and does not replace advice from a registered dental practitioner who has examined you. Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What training does a Core Dental specialist paediatric dentist have?

Our specialist paediatric dentists are registered with AHPRA as specialists, which follows further recognised training after the general dental degree. The training focuses on the oral health, development and behaviour guidance of children and adolescents.

Which Core Dental clinics have specialist paediatric dentists?

Specialist paediatric dentists work at some Core Dental clinics, including Berwick, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs and Epping. Sessions are limited and can change, so we ask you to confirm the next available session when you book.

How does Core Dental help an anxious child at the dentist?

We explain what will happen in child-friendly language, show the instruments and proceed slowly, an approach called tell-show-do. Where it is clinically appropriate, our paediatric dentists can also discuss sedation or general anaesthetic options with you.

Why are baby teeth important to look after?

Baby teeth hold space for adult teeth, guide their eruption and help children eat and speak. Untreated decay in baby teeth can be painful and can affect the permanent teeth forming underneath, so our dentists encourage early check-ups.

Can parents stay in the room at Core Dental?

Yes. At Core Dental parents are welcome in the treatment room and encouraged to be part of their child's visit, which can help children feel safe and comfortable in the clinic.

How can I check a paediatric specialist's registration?

You can search the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au to confirm that a dentist holds specialist registration in paediatric dentistry. Our team at Core Dental is happy to tell you who will care for your child.

Does Core Dental bulk bill children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule?

Core Dental bulk bills eligible children aged 0 to 17 under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. Eligibility is determined by Medicare, so please check and tell our team when you book.

How do I book a children's dental appointment at Core Dental?

Call 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au. Tell our team your child's age and any concerns, and we will help you choose a suitable clinic and appointment. We recommend a first visit from around age 2.