



NEWS RELEASE

Delta Dental Plans Association
1515 West 22nd Street
Suite 450
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523
Telephone 630-574-6001
Facsimile 630-574-6999

Contacts:
Kate Gerlesits, Delta Dental Plans Association
630-574-6994
kgerlesits@deltadental.com
or
Tina Valek, Group Leaf, LLC
651-430-1925
tina@groupleaf.com

Common Childhood Habits Could Endanger Kids' Teeth *Parents should monitor use of pacifiers, thumbs and bedtime bottles*

OAK BROOK, IL (November 13, 2007) -- Anyone who has experienced parenthood knows how a well-timed sippy cup of juice or pacifier can save the day – or the night. But the same things that soothe and comfort might also bring about oral health problems later in life.

In most cases, an infant obsessed with thumb sucking or a young toddler who needs a pacifier to nap are just fine, provided that these habits aren't carried on for too long. How do you know when it's time to break your child of his or her habit?

“Some kids continue these habits for a number of years without having any oral health problems, but it's still a good idea to wean children from these habits early to reduce the chances of causing improper jaw alignment or teeth positioning,” said Max Anderson, DDS, a national oral health advisor for Delta Dental Plans Association. “Your dentist can help monitor the situation and provide recommendations for preserving your child's oral health.”

Of more concern to dentists is the practice of giving children juice or milk in a bottle or sippy cup to sip on throughout the day or at bedtime. Prolonged exposure to the sugars found in milk and juice contribute to tooth decay and a condition known as baby bottle tooth decay, a painful and damaging consequence for young children to endure.

“Some people think it's not a big deal for a young child to get a cavity or lose a baby tooth since these primary teeth eventually fall out anyway,” said Dr. Anderson. “However, maintaining healthy baby teeth is extremely important for the long-term health of permanent teeth. When baby teeth are damaged by decay, it can affect nutrition, speech development and self-esteem, and can cause problems with spacing as permanent teeth grow in.”

Delta Dental Plans Association, based in Oak Brook, IL, is a national network of independent not-for-profit dental service corporations specializing in providing dental benefits programs to over 50 million Americans in more than 88,000 employee groups throughout the country.

###