

EARLY ORTHODONTIC ASSESSMENT IS VITAL

ENSURE YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT AND AVOID ORAL & AIRWAY PROBLEMS

Are you concerned about your child's breathing, swallowing, sleeping or general behaviour? An early orthodontic assessment of your child's teeth, mouth and airway is essential in ensuring healthy growth and development. Keith Nelson & Associates Dental Surgeons are specialists in family dentistry and orthodontics in children...

Many parents don't realise that their child's growth and development problems – from ADHD to thumb sucking to snoring or even bed wetting - can be indicative of and directly related to dental and jaw development.

A whopping 85% of the orofacial growth and development of your child's jaw and lower face occurs before the age of twelve. Therefore, it is best to assess your child's dental health before this age to ensure the best possible course of action for any existing or possible future problems. Whilst young, children's mouths are still forming, allowing an orthodontist or dental surgeon to easily prevent any future need for extractions or long periods of wearing teeth and mouth shaping devices such as braces.

In addition, simple techniques including removable orthodontic trainers or plates can be used to alleviate existing problems. They also work to minimise what could otherwise become a major orthodontic problem if left until teenage or adulthood.

Early assessment also allows a dental surgeon or orthodontist to assess your child's airway. Problems with airways in children strongly influence growth patterns and facial shape development. Airway efficiency is directly linked to a wide range of problems including ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder), asthma, bedwetting and recurrent middle ear infections, not to mention breathing and sleeping difficulties.

The way a child breathes directly affects the development and shape of the jaw, facial structure and even the bite. Children (and adults) should be able to easily and naturally breathe through their nose with the mouth closed. Nasal or airway obstruction could cause your child to breathe with their mouth open, causing facial muscles to narrow and elongate the upper jaw. The positioning of the tongue, the characteristic of a child's bite and even the pout of their lips can be affected and may also cause further problems.

Identifying and recognising these things early on in a child's life allows easier, inexpensive and far less traumatic treatment. It also increases your child's learning ability, natural appearance and general all round health. All in all, this makes for a happy child – which as most Mums and Dads out there realise, makes for a happy parent!

So if you've noticed that your child's breathing, sleeping or behaviour isn't quite what you think it should be, make an appointment with Keith Nelson & Associates to ensure there are no airway or other problems. By addressing it early, while your child's jaw is still soft and developing they can correct any potential issues before they become major problems.

Keith Nelson & Associates are based at 103 Franklin Rd. You can contact them on 378 0877 or infofranklin@keithnelson.co.nz with any concerns or questions about your family's dental health. Alternatively visit www.keithnelson.co.nz