

Orthodontics for Children

While there is no exact age for children to begin orthodontic treatment, the New Zealand Association of Orthodontists recommends visiting the orthodontist no later than age nine.

By this age, most children have a mix of baby teeth and adult teeth, making it easier for the orthodontist to diagnose and correct tooth and jaw problems sooner and pick up any unusual problems like missing or extra permanent teeth in the developing jaws.

Early treatment allows your orthodontist to:

- Correct and guide the growth of your child's jaw to help the permanent teeth come in to the correct relationships
- Coordinate the width of the upper and lower arches
- Maintain space for crowded teeth
- Minimise the need for permanent tooth extractions later in life
- Help stop thumb or finger sucking habits and help improve minor speech problems

For parents, it's not always easy to know if your child may need orthodontic treatment.

Signs that may mean your child needs to see an orthodontist:

- Early or late loss of baby teeth
- A hard time chewing or biting food
- Mouth breathing
- Finger or thumb sucking
- Crowded, misplaced, or blocked teeth
- Jaws that pop or make sounds when opening and closing
- Teeth that come together abnormally, or do not come together at all
- Jaws and teeth that are not proportionate to the rest of the face
- Crowded front teeth around age seven or eight

Please contact our practice to schedule an appointment for an orthodontic evaluation. Early treatment now will give your child a healthy, beautiful smile for the future.