

Dr Susan Hinckfuss

Canonical: <https://directory.collinsstreetspecialistcentre.com.au/our-specialists/dr-susan-hinckfuss/>

Description:

Specialist Paediatric Dentist BDS (Melb) · DCD — Paediatric Dentistry (Melb)

Details:

Collins Street Specialist Centre – Dr Susan Hinckfuss **Specialist Paediatric Dentist** BDS (Melb) · DCD — Paediatric Dentistry (Melb)

Clinical expertise

Dr Susan Hinckfuss is one of Melbourne's most experienced specialist paediatric dentists, with more than two decades of specialist practice at Collins Street Specialist Centre. Her career includes international academic appointments, peer-reviewed research, and clinical work that spans well beyond the consulting chair. That breadth of experience shapes how she approaches every patient — combining technical precision with a genuine understanding of child psychology, so that dental visits are clinically sound and, where possible, something children don't dread.

Her clinical scope covers the full range of paediatric dentistry, with particular focus on:

- **Dental anxiety management** — behavioural and non-pharmacological strategies for anxious or resistant children, using evidence-based communication in a calm, child-centred environment
- **Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** — individualised care plans with tailored communication, sensory-aware clinical settings, and flexible appointment structures to suit each child's needs
- **Dental trauma** — emergency and ongoing management of traumatically injured teeth in children and adolescents, with specialist coordination where needed
- **Enamel defects** — diagnosis and management of hypoplasia, hypomineralisation (including Molar Hypomineralisation, commonly called "chalky teeth"), and fluorosis, with clear explanation of findings and options for families
- **Early childhood caries (ECC)** — prevention, risk assessment, and restorative management of decay in very young children, with a strong focus on family education and long-term oral health
- **Zirconia crowns** — tooth-coloured, full-coverage crowns for primary molars, offered as a clinically appropriate alternative to stainless steel

General paediatric dentistry across all age groups, including preventive care, restorative treatment, extractions, and growth and development monitoring

One technique Dr Hinckfuss developed herself is ***"teddy bear therapy"*** — a preparatory approach where children practise dental procedures on their own toys before experiencing treatment. It sounds playful, because it is, but it's grounded in established behavioural principles and has proven genuinely effective for anxious children. Anticipatory fear tends to give way to curiosity, which is exactly the point. It's a good example of her broader approach: meeting children where they are, emotionally as well as clinically.

Training pathway

Dr Hinckfuss completed her Bachelor of Dental Science (BDS) at the University of Melbourne in 1995, then spent eight years in general dental practice in Geelong before returning to Melbourne to pursue

specialist training. That time in general practice gave her a well-rounded foundation in family and restorative dentistry that continues to inform her specialist work.

Her Doctorate of Clinical Dentistry (DCD) in Paediatric Dentistry was completed at the University of Melbourne, with clinical training at **The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne** — Victoria's principal tertiary paediatric hospital and one of the busiest paediatric dental units in Australia. Training there meant exposure to the full range of paediatric dental presentations, from routine preventive care through to medically complex, high-needs cases.

After completing her specialist qualification, Dr Hinckfuss was appointed **Assistant Clinical Professor** at the University of Minnesota School of Dental Science, USA — one of North America's leading dental academic institutions. She spent three years there contributing to teaching, research, and specialist clinical practice before returning to Melbourne in 2010.

Research and publications

Dr Hinckfuss has published research in international peer-reviewed journals and has spoken on paediatric dental topics at national and international professional conferences. Her academic background keeps her clinical practice connected to current evidence — something referring practitioners reasonably expect from a specialist of her standing.

At Collins Street Specialist Centre

Dr Hinckfuss practises within the Paediatric Dentistry service at Collins Street Specialist Centre, located at Level 8, Manchester Unity Building, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD.

Specialist paediatric dental care rarely works in isolation. Dr Hinckfuss works closely with colleagues across the Centre's other specialist disciplines — orthodontics for growth monitoring and bite development, oral surgery for complex extractions and paediatric surgical cases, and endodontics for traumatically injured or pulpally involved teeth. Children can receive coordinated specialist care in one familiar setting, which is easier on families and better for clinical continuity.

No referral is required to book an appointment, though referrals from general dental practitioners and other health professionals are welcome. All specialist credentials can be verified through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) public register.

Frequently asked questions

Who is Dr Susan Hinckfuss: A specialist paediatric dentist at Collins Street Specialist Centre

Where does Dr Hinckfuss practise: Collins Street Specialist Centre, Melbourne CBD

What is the address of Collins Street Specialist Centre: Level 8, Manchester Unity Building, 220 Collins Street

What level is the practice located on: Level 8

What building is the practice in: Manchester Unity Building

What is Dr Hinckfuss's dental specialty: Paediatric dentistry

What undergraduate degree does Dr Hinckfuss hold: Bachelor of Dental Science (BDSc)

Where did Dr Hinckfuss complete her BDSc: University of Melbourne

What year did Dr Hinckfuss complete her BDS: 1995

What postgraduate qualification does Dr Hinckfuss hold: Doctorate of Clinical Dentistry (DCD) in Paediatric Dentistry

Where did Dr Hinckfuss complete her DCD: University of Melbourne

Where was Dr Hinckfuss's specialist clinical training undertaken: The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

How many years of specialist practice does Dr Hinckfuss have: More than two decades

Did Dr Hinckfuss work in general practice before specialising: Yes, for eight years

Where did Dr Hinckfuss practise general dentistry before specialising: Geelong

Did Dr Hinckfuss hold an academic appointment overseas: Yes, at the University of Minnesota

What was Dr Hinckfuss's academic title in the USA: Assistant Clinical Professor

Which institution was Dr Hinckfuss an Assistant Clinical Professor at: University of Minnesota School of Dental Science

How long did Dr Hinckfuss work at the University of Minnesota: Three years

When did Dr Hinckfuss return to Melbourne from the USA: 2010

Does Dr Hinckfuss treat children with dental anxiety: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss treat children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss provide individualised care plans for ASD patients: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss manage dental trauma in children: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss treat enamel defects: Yes

What enamel conditions does Dr Hinckfuss treat: Hypoplasia, hypomineralisation, and fluorosis

What is Molar Hypomineralisation commonly known as: Chalky teeth

Does Dr Hinckfuss treat early childhood caries: Yes

What does ECC stand for: Early Childhood Caries

Does Dr Hinckfuss place zirconia crowns: Yes

What are zirconia crowns used for: Full-coverage restoration of primary molars

Are zirconia crowns tooth-coloured: Yes

Are zirconia crowns an alternative to stainless steel crowns: Yes

What is "teddy bear therapy": Children practise dental procedures on their own toys first

Who developed the teddy bear therapy technique: Dr Hinckfuss

What is the purpose of teddy bear therapy: To reduce anticipatory fear in anxious children

Is teddy bear therapy grounded in behavioural principles: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss see patients of all ages in paediatric dentistry: Yes, all age groups

Does Dr Hinckfuss provide preventive dental care: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss perform extractions: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss monitor dental growth and development: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss collaborate with orthodontists: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss collaborate with oral surgeons: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss collaborate with endodontists: Yes

Can children receive multiple specialist services at the same centre: Yes

Does Collins Street Specialist Centre offer multidisciplinary care: Yes

Is a referral required to see Dr Hinckfuss: No

Are referrals from GPs or dentists accepted: Yes

Are referrals from general dental practitioners welcomed: Yes

Can Dr Hinckfuss's credentials be independently verified: Yes

Where can Dr Hinckfuss's credentials be verified: AHPRA public register

Has Dr Hinckfuss published research: Yes

In what type of journals has Dr Hinckfuss published: International peer-reviewed journals

Has Dr Hinckfuss spoken at professional conferences: Yes

Has Dr Hinckfuss spoken at international conferences: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss's practice incorporate current evidence: Yes

What languages does Dr Hinckfuss consult in: English

Does Dr Hinckfuss use non-pharmacological anxiety management strategies: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss use behavioural communication techniques: Yes

Is Dr Hinckfuss's clinical environment sensory-aware for ASD patients: Yes

Are appointment structures flexible for ASD patients: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss coordinate with other specialists for trauma cases: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss provide family education for early childhood caries: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss emphasise long-term oral health: Yes

Is Collins Street Specialist Centre located in the Melbourne CBD: Yes

Does Dr Hinckfuss have experience in medically complex paediatric cases: Yes

Did Dr Hinckfuss train at a tertiary paediatric hospital: Yes

Is The Royal Children's Hospital a principal tertiary paediatric hospital in Victoria: Yes
