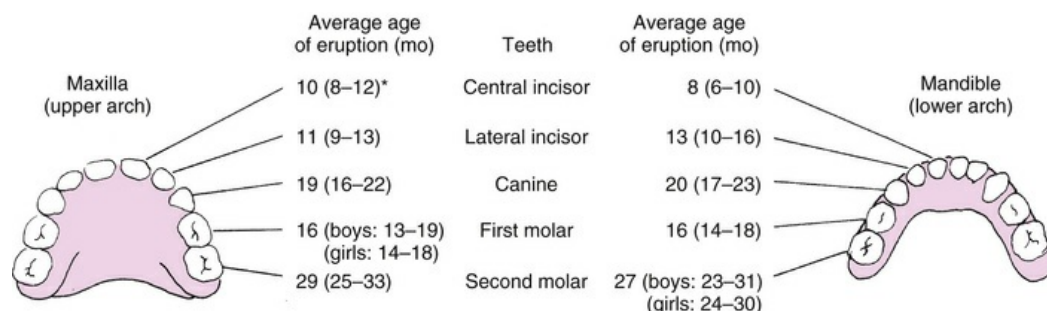


years old, but thumb sucking may persist well into the school-age years. Because of the limited number of studies correlating pacifier use and increased risk of infections or dental malocclusion, there are no recommendations for or against pacifier use related to oral health (Nelson, 2012). Both pacifier use and thumb sucking may also have significant cultural variations. Thumb sucking reaches its peak at age 18 to 20 months old and is most prevalent when children are hungry, tired, or feeling insecure. Persistent thumb sucking in a listless, apathetic child always warrants investigation. It may be a sign of an emotional problem between the parent and child or of boredom, isolation, and lack of stimulation.

## Teething

One of the more difficult periods in infants' (and parents') lives is the eruption of the deciduous (primary) teeth, often referred to as *teething*. The age of tooth eruption shows considerable variation among children, but the order of their appearance is fairly regular and predictable (Fig. 9-10). The first primary teeth to erupt are the lower central incisors, which appear at approximately 6 to 10 months old (average, 8 months old). These are followed closely by the upper central incisors. A quick guide to assessment of deciduous teeth during the first 2 years is: Age of the child in months – 6 = Number of teeth. For example: 8 months of age – 6 = 2 teeth at this time.



**FIG 9-10** Sequence of eruption of primary teeth.

\*Range represents  $\pm 1$  standard deviation, or 67% of subjects studied. (Data from American Dental Association, *Eruption*

*charts*, 2014, <http://www.ada.org/2930.aspx?currentTab=1.>)

Teething is a physiologic process; some discomfort is common as