

healthyfamilies healthysmiles

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Healthy Little Smiles

A new resource will be available soon to support early childhood professionals to embed oral health promotion in their services. The Healthy Little Smiles – early childhood oral health resource kit has been developed by Dental Health Services Victoria in partnership with professionals from the early childhood sector.

The kit includes a manual with supporting resources including: key oral health messages, age appropriate learning opportunities, ideas to incorporate oral health into daily activities and routines, tips for engaging families around oral health and links to supporting resources, including policy sample, fact sheets and newsletter inserts. A professional development workshop will also support the roll out of the kit.

The kit and workshop have been developed to align with the National Quality Standards for early childhood education and care and the Early Years Learning and Development Frameworks. It has also been developed in consultation with the Healthy Together Achievement Program and supports services to meet the requirements of the healthy eating and oral health priority area.

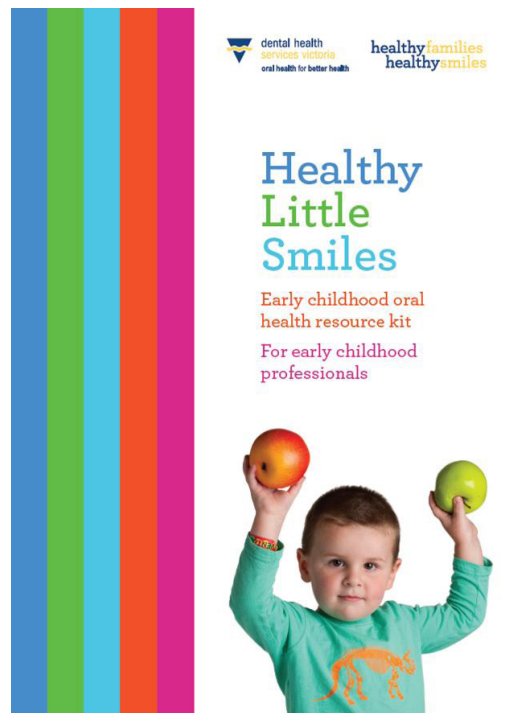
To ensure that the resource kit meets the needs of early childhood professionals it will be pilot tested with selected services. The pilot will involve educators working through a section of the resource kit, trialling some of the suggested resources and providing feedback via an online survey. A professional development session will be offered to communities participating in the pilot.

The professional development session will build the capacity of early childhood professionals to support oral health within their services and at home by using the Healthy Little Smiles resource kit. Professionals from long day care, family day care and kindergartens are welcome to participate in the training session which will be held at a time and place convenient for participants.

The pilot will be run over term one and term two in 2015. Dental Health Services Victoria is currently taking expressions of interest to be part of the pilot testing of Healthy Little Smiles.

For more information or to register an expression of interest contact:

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More Vegies Please!

Vegetables are important for healthy bodies and provide different textures, tastes and colours that make food enjoyable.

Despite this, preliminary findings from the Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey in 2009 showed that less than half (45%) of Victorian children aged between 4 and 8 years are eating the recommended amount. As a professional you can offer advice to parents about ensuring that children are getting enough vegetables each day.

Tips for eating more vegies

- Babies are often introduced to vegetables when moving to solid food at around 6 months of age. Introducing a variety of vegetables and progressing from smooth, to lumpy and small pieces will get baby ready for a lifetime of enjoying vegetables.
- When children see family members enjoying vegetables everyday they will be more likely to want them too. In early childhood services, staff can role model healthy eating by eating their lunch with children and enjoying their vegetables and having positive discussions with children about eating vegetables.
- Every little bit helps—try adding vegetables to family meals such as pasta sauces and soups. Another idea is to incorporate colourful side dishes such as salads or roasted/boiled vegetables.
- Involve children in growing vegetables and herbs or choosing them when shopping. Try alfalfa on a bench or herbs on a windowsill or in the garden.
- Include vegetables at snack time such as bite sized veggies with dips, grated carrot or beetroot in sandwiches.

Make vegetables fun!

- Try a different way of presenting vegetables such as using a peeler to create ribbons of carrots or cucumber.
- Present vegetables attractively. In early childhood services children could make funny faces on a plate with prepared vegetables or use cookie cutters for fun shapes in larger fruit such as watermelons. This can help to generate healthy discussion and taste the foods used.

Use positive language

- Children pick up on attitudes to food, so use positive language like, “They taste good and help your body to grow and be strong.”

Avoiding common pitfalls

Parents often worry about whether their child is eating enough which can lead to strategies that in the long run can make healthy choices even harder. Some practical advice you could offer:

- Avoid offering unhealthy treats as a reward or as this reinforces fussy eating and a preference for these foods.
- Don't give up if a vegetable is refused- it can take up to 10-15 times before a child will try something new. Encourage children to explore new foods by touching, smelling, licking, or tasting and praise attempts.
- Offering different meals or snacks when a food is refused can teach children that they can get what they want if they hold out. Try putting the meal or snack aside and offering again later.
- Stay neutral and ignore tantrums. Take the food away until everyone is calm and try again.

For lots of great tips to make vegetables fun log on to:

The Better Health Channel
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Raising Children Network
<http://www.raisingchildren.net.au>

Healthy Eating Advisory Service:
<http://heas.healthytogether.vic.gov.au>

Note: The recommended servings of vegetables per day for 2-3 year olds is 2.5 serves and for 4-8 year olds it is 4.5 serves.



Dental Health at VICSEG Playgroups

VICSEG New Futures is a community organisation providing support to newly arrived and recently settled migrant communities throughout the northern and western Melbourne regions.

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Karen Diacono is the Wyndham Programs Administrator and has been working with VICSEG's dedicated Bilingual Playgroup Leaders for the past four years to coordinate five cultural playgroups. These include families from Burma, Iran and the Horn of Africa, totalling 60 families regularly attending each week.

VICSEG have been working in partnership with DHSV to promote oral health in playgroups through education and positive examples for families. They have established links with local organisations that have provided groups with fresh fruit and veggies to take home weekly. VICSEG also provides information to help families identify misleading food packaging when grocery shopping.

Karen says "some of the fun activities we do at our playgroups to promote good dental health are creating fruit kebabs with yoghurt and getting the older children to help cut up soft fruits and arrange them on platters as a way of encouraging nutritional and healthy eating at snack time."

Some playgroup parents have not had opportunities to learn about the importance of oral health for good overall health.

Many of the families attending VICSEG's playgroups for the first time only weeks after leaving refugee camps. Karen and her colleagues provide parents with information about the benefits of brushing twice a day, not just for their child but for every member of their family.



Karen Diacono and Shiny Angel Jah

Oral health newsletter inserts for early childhood professionals

A series of newsletter inserts have been developed for professionals to include newsletters for families. The inserts have been developed with early childhood educators in mind, however anyone who distributes a newsletter to families could use them. The newsletter articles cover the key oral health messages Drink well, Eat well, Clean well and Stay well.

The newsletter inserts include images which can be used to accompany the article, or you could include photos of children who attend your services doing activities relating to Drink well, Eat well, Clean well and Stay well.

The newsletter inserts can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dhsv.org.au/professionals/educators-early-childhood>



Oral health newsletter inserts

for early childhood services



healthy families
healthy smiles

dental health
services victoria
oral health for better health

Playgroup Flipchart Results

Local supported playgroups have been trialling the Baby Teeth Count too! flipchart

The Healthy Families Healthy Smiles team have been working with communities to pilot the Baby teeth count too! – oral health information for playgroups flipchart.

A total of 35 playgroup facilitators participated in the flipchart pilot training sessions and 12 facilitators have returned their evaluation surveys to date. Facilitators reported that they had used the flipchart with 123 parents. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive with all parents indicating that the flipchart was a good way to discuss oral health and that they learnt something new. Almost all reported that they would recommend the flipchart to other playgroups and particularly liked the images accompanying each key message.



The Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles team will be collaborating with the playgroup working group to determine how best to roll out more broadly. Stay tuned for more details.

Oral health reaching GP practice staff on the Mornington Peninsula

Working with local partners is a key strategy for Healthy Families Healthy Smiles. Local partners know their communities and how best to reach them.

A successful partnership with Frankston Mornington Peninsula Medicare Local (FMPML) resulted in staff from 16 GP practices attending the Healthy Futures – health screening and prevention in children 0 to 4 years of age capacity building event held in Mornington on 3 September 2014.

Oral health was identified as a priority for FMPML in their population health plan. A partnership agreement was reached with DHSV and planning began in early 2014. FMPML invited Peninsula Health Public Dental Service, Health Promotion Team and the Child Health Alliance to be part of the working group. Over the months a well-planned targeted Continuing Professional Development event (CPD points attached) consisting of two one hour sessions, the ‘Healthy Kids check’ and ‘Healthy Teeth Healthy Futures’ materialised.

A total of 23 participants including seven GPs and 16 practice nurses attended the Healthy Futures event which was chaired by Dr Helen Keleher (Director of Population Health Planning and Stakeholder Relations FMPML). Dr Lily Milczarek, Dr Amar Beharee (Peninsula Health Dental Service) and Gillian Lang (DHSV) delivered the “Healthy Teeth Healthy Futures” session. This included background on early childhood caries; GP practice staff role in early detection of oral health concerns and the new e-referral pathway to the Peninsula Health Dental Service with hands on practice using iPads.

The feedback was very positive. All participants agreed that they gained new knowledge or skills, intended to use what they had learnt and were more confident to support good oral health for their clients. Concerning the new e-referral pathway, 94% of participants agreed that they felt confident to use the e-referral. Peninsula Health is planning to follow up participants to gauge whether changes have taken place in practice.

Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles would like to thank FMPML and Peninsula Health for their commitment to oral health.



Working together for healthy communities - the Loddon Mallee Prevention Conference

A presentation at the Loddon Mallee Prevention Conference shared the findings from the pilot of the Bigger Better Smiles program with a wider audience.

Two Aboriginal Health Workers from Mallee District Aboriginal Service (MDAS), James Peterson and Paul Roberts, paired up with Rebecca Crawford, DHSV's Aboriginal Community Development Officer) and Gillian Lang, Healthy Families Healthy Smiles Project Officer, to present at the Loddon Mallee Prevention Conference held on 16 September 2014. The presentation of Bigger Better Smiles was part of the health equity and inclusion stream of the conference.

The presentation demonstrated how the partnership with MDAS produced "Bigger Better Smiles" as an appropriate oral health education program for staff of Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations. Both Mr Peterson and Mr Roberts, who were participants, explained what they got out of Bigger Better Smiles and how they were now including oral health promotion in their practice. They also highlighted how MDAS as an organisation were planning to embed oral health within health and early childhood services.

As a result of the presentation, Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative expressed interest in the program and DHSV is currently planning to adapt the program for their service.

If you wish to view the presentation visit <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/loddonmallee/events.htm>



James Peterson and Paul Roberts

Spotlight on: Protecting Tiny Teeth

The NSW branch of Australian Dental Association has partnered with Dr Karl Kruszelnicki to help protect baby teeth from decay. The DVD is available from the NSW Australian Dental Association. It is informative and includes a parent's perspective.

Professionals working with families can order the DVD online. Copies of the DVD are not available to the general public, but can be viewed at www.protectingtinyteeth.com.au

Overall this video is a good resource but highlights the need for consistent messages nationally. This video contains some messages which differ from the Australian Dietary Guidelines. When viewing the video please keep in mind;

- The Australian Dietary Guidelines states that the intrinsic sugar of fruit and vegetables is less cariogenic than foods high in added sugars. Generally, eating fruit between meals does not cause tooth decay.
- Fruit yogurt already contains sugar from the fruit and milk; it is the added sugar that is the problem. Encourage your clients to read the nutritional table to check the amount of sugar per 100g. The lower the sugar the better. Sugar content does vary from brand to brand.



Google
"protecting
tiny teeth"

get in touch

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