

Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services





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FOREWORD

We are pleased to present *Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services*.

This resource has been developed by the Health Promotion Division, Dental Health Services Victoria as part of the Victorian Oral Health Promotion Strategy 2002-2004 Grants Program funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services.

Good oral health is important for general health and well being. There is clear evidence of the benefits of investing in health promotion programs. This resource will assist the early childhood sector to promote oral health in young children.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many stakeholders who contributed their expertise and enthusiasm for oral health promotion practice during the development of this resource.

Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services will strengthen preschool oral health promotion in Victoria and will be a key step in improving oral health outcomes for young children.



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I. Acknowledgements

A number of stakeholders have informed the development of *Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services*.

These include:

- *Preschool Oral Health Promotion Project 2003 Steering Committee.*
- *Teeth for Life Project, Plenty Valley Community Health Service Inc.*
- *Promoting Oral Health of Children in a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Municipality Project, City of Greater Dandenong.*
- *Promoting Oral Health in a Newly Emerging Somali Community Project, Banyule Community Health Service.*
- *Monash Preschool Dental Program, City of Monash.*
- Primary and Community Health, Rural and Regional and Aged Care Division, Victorian Department of Human Services.
- Health Development Section, Public Health, Rural and Regional and Aged Care Division, Victorian Department of Human Services.
- Early Years Unit, Family and Community Support Branch, Community Care Division, Victorian Department of Human Services.

The contributions and support of all involved are gratefully acknowledged.

The information in this resource is general information and is not a substitute for advice from a dental or health professional.

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This resource is also available at www.dhsv.org.au/ResourcePack.pdf

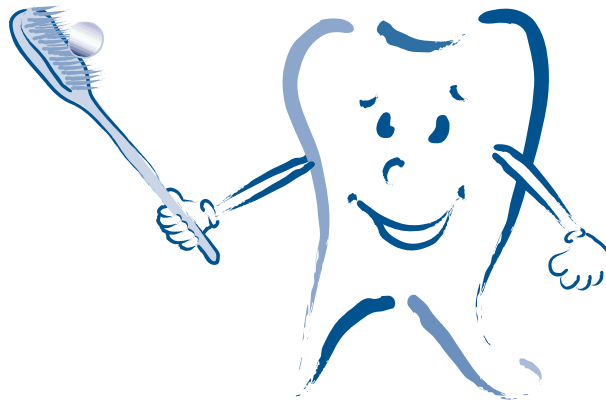
II. Preface

About the Victorian Department of Human Services strategy for promoting oral health.

The Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) has identified oral health promotion as a priority. *The Victorian Oral Health Promotion Strategy, Promoting Oral Health 2000-2004: Strategic Directions and Framework for Action* (www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/oral/index.htm) outlines a framework for oral health promotion activity throughout Victoria and encourages the development of environments which are supportive of good oral health. Settings such as childcare centres, preschools and kindergartens (collectively referred to as children's services) can play an important role in promoting young children's oral health.

As part of the implementation of the Victorian Oral Health Promotion Strategy, DHS produced and distributed the booklet, *Oral Health Promotion: A Practical Guide for Children's Services* (www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/oral/index.htm). This resource aims to support children's services staff to promote oral health. It includes information that will assist children's services to develop oral health policies and toothbrushing programs.

1. INTRODUCTION



**The purpose of Oral Health Promotion:
A Resource Pack for Children's Services**

Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services is an important tool in promoting oral health within the early childhood sector.

The aim of this resource is to raise awareness of oral health issues in early childhood settings and to support children's services and preschool health and education professionals in promoting oral health. It is designed to complement an early childhood health program.

This resource presents ideas, opportunities and activities to engage parents and carers of children aged 0-6 years in promoting oral health.

Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services will assist children's services staff to:

- Incorporate oral health into their curriculum and daily program;
- Encourage and support good oral health for the children in their care through activities, play and discussion; and
- Provide access for parents/carers to advice and information regarding children's oral health.

The Resource Pack includes:

- Activities and other ideas to promote oral health including key oral health messages and learning outcomes for young children;
- Oral health information;
- Information about developing oral health policies including:
 - Overcoming barriers
 - How to develop a working party
 - How to write, implement and monitor an oral health policy

- Samples and suggestions
- Special occasions and birthdays
- Toothbrushing programs; and
- Tip sheets for parents, grandparents and carers of children aged 0-12 months, 1-2 years, 2-6 years (See plastic pocket inside back cover).

The suggested activities have been carefully developed, ensuring they:

- Require minimal preparation time;
- Are simply applied in practice;
- Offer an enjoyable learning experience for children; and
- Work towards achievable learning outcomes.

Why promote oral health?

There are many important reasons for promoting oral health in young children. Good oral health is an essential part of general health and wellbeing, yet it is not widely recognised by the general community. The deciduous dentition ('first' or 'primary' teeth) is important for young children to develop their eating ability, speech patterns, appearance and later, to guide the eruption and position of their permanent teeth.

Oral health issues for children aged 0-6 years

There have been significant improvements in the oral health of children over the last twenty years. Several factors, including water fluoridation, the use of fluoride toothpaste and the increased availability of dental services have contributed to this improvement (DHS, 2000).

Oral disease is largely preventable. Many children still suffer unnecessarily from the pain and complications of dental decay. School Dental Service data (2002) shows that 42 percent of 5 year old children experienced dental decay, 75 percent of which was untreated (DHSV, 2003).

Every child is at risk of developing dental decay, although some groups of children are more vulnerable than others. There are marked inequalities, with those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and rural communities experiencing the greatest risk. Children living in fluoridated areas have far better oral health than their counterparts living in non-fluoridated areas (DHS, 2000).

Early childhood is when many lifetime habits are established. It offers the opportunity to prepare for good health in later years. As young children grow and develop they are constantly exposed to new experiences and they respond by developing new behaviours and skills. Through the socialisation of a child, parents and carers can influence behaviours in early life, with the potential to set patterns, which are then carried into adulthood. Establishing good health behaviours early in life is important.

Promoting oral health in children's services

Children's services provide ideal settings through which to promote good oral health (DHS, 2000a). Children's services staff play a significant role in education and the modelling of healthy behaviours to young children. By incorporating oral health into the daily program, it is possible to create an environment which is supportive of good oral health.

Children's services are required to include oral hygiene in their daily program, as specified in the *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for Long Day Care Centres* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003a). This resource pack provides children's services with a practical guide to incorporating oral health into daily programs.



Working with parents and carers

Parents tend to be very receptive to information and advice during their child's early years. Early childhood workers can encourage parents and carers to actively support their child's oral health at home by informing them of the importance of oral health. Parents and carers can be encouraged to assist their children to clean their teeth after meals, to offer dentally-friendly snacks, to discuss dental visits with their children, and to seek additional advice and information.

Strategies for involving parents and carers:

- Distribute photocopied tip sheets (see plastic pocket inside back cover) to encourage and support discussion with parents.
- Develop oral health displays that create interest for children and their parents and carers.
- Use the entry and waiting areas of your centre to display information, brochures and posters.
- Include oral health tips and information in newsletters.
- Invite a dental professional to speak to parents (see Stay Well section, page 27).
- Involve parents in creating an environment which supports good oral health. For example;
 - Ask them to contribute healthy recipes and food ideas for inclusion in newsletters.
 - Invite them to assist you in conducting a healthy breakfast or lunch event.
 - Seek their input into the establishment of oral health policies.
 - Involve them in the development of a toothbrushing program appropriate to your centre.

SUGGESTION:

Promote your centre's oral health activities. For example, contact the media and tell your local community about the ways in which you are supporting the oral health of local children.

Using Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services

Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services provides children's services staff with a starting point for developing an oral health program.

This resource has built much of its content around the *Oral Health Guidelines for Victorians* (DHS, 2003) developed as part of the Victorian Oral Health Promotion Strategy (DHS, 2000). The guidelines include key oral health messages aimed at improving the oral health of the community. They provide an appropriate starting point for the information presented in this resource (see Appendix for full list of key oral health messages).

Oral Health Promotion: A Resource Pack for Children's Services is divided into the following sections:

- THE MOUTH
- EAT WELL
- DRINK WELL
- CLEAN WELL
- PLAY WELL
- STAY WELL

Each of these sections provides oral health information and activities (including learning outcomes) to assist children's services staff to develop an oral health program.

The activities included are most suitable for children aged 3-6 years. We encourage you to select and adapt the suggested activities to suit your needs, and to apply your own planning and teaching style to address the specific needs of the children in your care.

In addition,

- The resource provides helpful advice regarding the development of oral health policies, including a step by step approach to policy development (see Policy section, page 33).
- A list of additional resources is included suggesting materials you may wish to purchase to enhance your oral health promotion program (see Additional Resources & Other Information, page 37).
- A contact list is also provided highlighting key contacts working in oral health promotion, through whom you may be able to access additional information and support (see Additional Resources & Other Information – Contacts, page 38).
- Tip sheets for parents regarding their children's oral health are also provided, to reinforce activities and messages implemented in the early childhood setting. These aim to offer advice and information to parents, assisting them to promote good oral health at home. They are easily photocopied for distribution to parents, and their content can be included in parent newsletters (see plastic pocket inside back cover).

As you come across more resources and information about oral health, we suggest you add them to your resource pack and build on your oral health program and its integration into your existing curriculum.

In this resource, suitable healthy and nutritious foods are referred to as *everyday* foods. Sweet foods and food items that are high in added sugar content are referred to as *sometimes* foods.

Clinical advice about oral health issues should be sought from a local dental professional.

2. THE MOUTH

KEY INFORMATION

- Good oral health is essential for eating and speech, and affects physical appearance and self-esteem. (DHS, 2000b)
- Deciduous (baby) teeth are important in guiding the growth and development of permanent teeth. (DHS, 2000b)

Topic Introduction

This section introduces children to the mouth and covers:

- The importance of healthy teeth
- The function of the mouth
- The importance of baby teeth

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this section children will be able to identify that:

- The mouth is made up of teeth, lips, cheeks and a tongue
- Teeth are important for eating, speaking and appearance
- Teeth have the following functions – front teeth cut food, corner teeth tear food and back teeth grind food
- Like the whole body, teeth need to be looked after throughout a person's lifetime

Things you will need

Scissors, magazines, glue, paper, play doh, shells, paint, egg cartons, apple, story book about teeth





Classroom discussion – ask the children

QUESTION

What can you see inside your mouth?

Describe your teeth, tongue and lips

What is your mouth used for?

What do babies without teeth eat?

Who should help you brush your teeth?

Who can help you look after your teeth?

How are your teeth like the leaves that fall in Autumn?

How are your teeth like the flowers that bloom in Spring?

ANSWER

Lips, teeth, gums, cheeks, tongue.

Teeth are white and hard. The tongue is pink and it allows us to taste food and talk. Lips are pink and soft.

Eating, chewing, drinking, talking, singing, whistling, smiling, kissing.

Milk or baby food.

Mum, Dad, Grandparent, other adults.

Mum, Dad, Dentist, Dental Therapist.

Baby teeth become loose, fall out and make room for adult teeth.

New teeth grow two times: first, when you are a baby and second, when your baby teeth have fallen out to make room for adult teeth.

2

Ask the children to turn to the person next to them and smile. Without touching the other child's mouth, can they count the number of teeth?

How many children have:

- a loose tooth?
- had a tooth fall out?
- new teeth?

3 *Magazines, glue, paper*

Collect pictures of children with healthy smiles and paste them onto posters. Encourage children to collect pictures of smiling children from diverse cultural backgrounds.

4 *Play doh, Shells, Paint, Egg Cartons*

Make a model mouth using either play doh and shells or painted egg cartons.

5 Apple (sliced)

As a morning tea activity, lead children in an exploration of various aspects of their teeth. Different teeth do different jobs (front teeth cut, corner teeth tear, back teeth grind). Children can use a slice of apple to demonstrate the functions of the teeth.

6 Magazines, glue, paper

Build a collage of different animals and their teeth types. Arrange the pictures into groups of incisors (cutting teeth), canines (tearing teeth) and molars (crushing teeth). Here are some examples:

- Lions, cats and dogs have big corner teeth called canines for tearing meat.
 - Rabbits have big front teeth called incisors for biting vegetables.
 - Horses and cows have large flat back teeth for chewing and grinding grass.
 - Sharks have many rows of teeth.
 - Birds have beaks instead of teeth to crack grains and shells.
-

7 Story time

Read or tell a story about teeth. Use a puppet, doll or other props to animate the story (see Additional Resources & Other Information, page 37).

8 Sing "The Toothbrush Song"
with the children

The Toothbrush Song

When you wake up in the morning
At a quarter to one
And you can't go back to sleep
And you want to have some fun
You brush your teeth –
ch ch ch ch ch ch

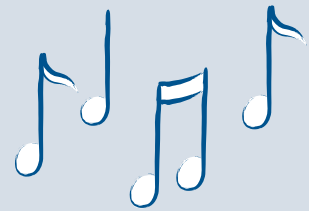
When you wake up in the morning
At a quarter to two
And you can't go back to sleep
So what do you do?
You brush your teeth –
ch ch ch ch ch ch

When you wake up in the morning
at a quarter to four
And you can't go back to sleep
Because you've fallen on the floor
You brush your teeth –
ch ch ch ch ch ch

When you wake up in the morning
At a quarter to six
And you can't go back to sleep
And you want to do some tricks
You brush your teeth –
ch ch ch ch ch ch

When you wake up in the morning
At a quarter to eight
And you feel very sleepy
But you're going to be late
You brush your teeth –
ch ch ch ch ch ch

*R&P Mapleson,
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3. EAT WELL

KEY MESSAGES:

The *Oral Health Guidelines (DHS, 2003)* state:

- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods.
- If you eat sugary foods and sweets, limit their intake – especially between meals.
- Enjoy healthy snacks.

Topic Introduction

This section introduces children to oral health and nutrition and covers:

- *Everyday* and *sometimes* foods.

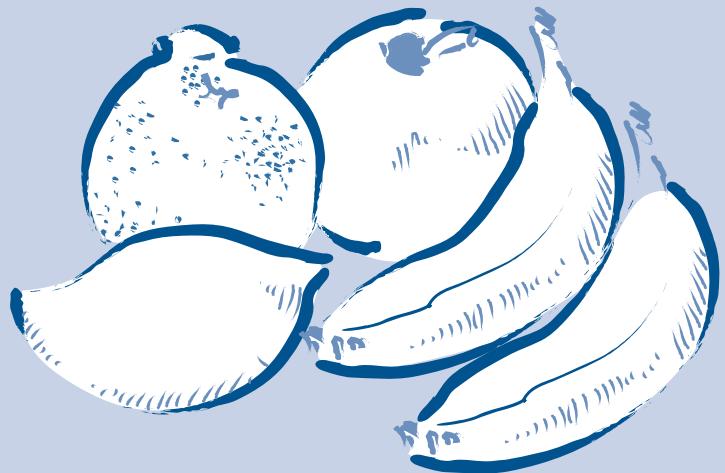
Learning Outcomes

On completion of this section children will be able to identify that:

- There are *everyday* and *sometimes* foods.
- *Everyday* foods are good for teeth.
- *Sometimes* foods are best kept to mealtimes

Things you will need

Magazines, food packages, plastic food or real food, paper plates, food puzzles.



Classroom discussion



QUESTION

Why is food important?

List some *everyday* foods

List some *sometimes* foods

Why are lollies bad for your teeth?

When is the best time to eat *sometimes* foods?

ANSWER

Food helps growth and development and provides energy to think and play.

Fruit, vegetables, cereals, milk, cheese, yoghurt and meat.

Sweet biscuits, lollies and cakes.

They can be too hard or too sticky. They contain too much sugar and can cause dental decay.

With meals.

2 Magazines, food packages, plastic or real food

Make a collection of *everyday* and *sometimes* foods using pictures, food packaging, plastic or real food, separating them into two groups. Encourage children to collect foods from diverse cultural backgrounds.

3 Paper plates, pictures

Make paper plate meals by pasting pictures of *everyday* foods onto paper plates (try to show a variety of foods eaten by people of diverse cultural backgrounds).

4 Fruit, vegetables, cheese, chocolate bar, chips, blanket or tea towel

Play a memory game. Display a variety of *everyday* and *sometimes* foods. Cover them with a blanket and ask the children to recall the items.

5

Use puzzles to identify *everyday* foods and *sometimes* foods.

6

Role-play shopping where children buy/sell *everyday* foods.

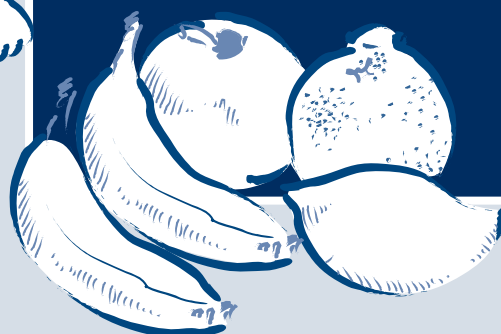
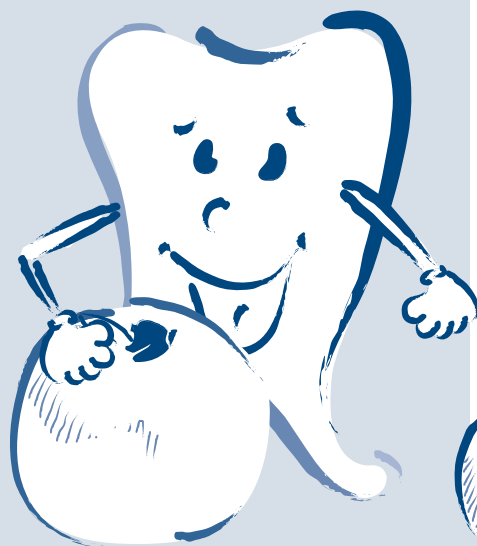
7 Sing this song with the children



Sparkle, Sparkle Little Teeth (To the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Sparkle, sparkle little teeth
Some above and some beneath
Brush them after every meal
Clean and fresh they'll always feel
Sparkle, sparkle little teeth
Some above and some beneath

Snacking, snacking, it's okay
Healthy eating is the way
Eat fresh veggies, fruit and cheese
Dentist will say "I am pleased!"
Snacking, snacking, it's okay
Healthy eating is the way



EVERYDAY FOOD

Plant foods

- Fruit – fresh, stewed, frozen, tinned.
- Vegetables – fresh, raw, steamed, grilled.

Try carrot or celery sticks with creamed cheese, peanut butter, yoghurt and other dips.

- Grains, cereals – rice, pasta, noodles, buckwheat, polenta, pita bread, flat bread, foccacia, english muffins, crumpets, crispbreads, crackers, low sugar breakfast cereals, rolled oats, rice cakes, wheat bread/rolls, rye bread, multigrain bread.

Dairy

- Milk, cheese slices or sticks; fruit or plain yoghurt
- Soy-based calcium enriched foods can be a substitute for dairy products. The Recommended Dietary Intake of calcium for children aged 1-3 years is 700mg per day and 800mg for children aged 4-7 years. (*Commonwealth of Australia, 2003b*).

Meat or protein foods

- Lean meat, chicken, fish fingers, fish/tuna; lentils, baked beans, tofu, hard-boiled egg.

Spreads and fillings

- Hummus dip, tahini spread, peanut butter, cheese spread.

SOMETIMES FOOD

- Sweetened breakfast cereals.
- Fruit bars and 'strips'.
- Muesli/"health" bars that are high in sugar.
- Cake and cake icing.
- Biscuits.
- Chocolate.
- Lollies.
- Sweet spreads (such as jam, honey, hazelnut spread).
- Hot chips and potato chips/crisps.
- Meat pies and sausage rolls.
- Ice cream, dairy desserts.

4. DRINK WELL

KEY MESSAGES:

The *Oral Health Guidelines* (DHS, 2003) state:

- Drink plenty of tap water – especially if fluoridated.
- If you drink acidic and sugary drinks such as soft drinks, sports drinks, cordials and fruit juices, limit their consumption and frequency.
- Milk and flavoured milks are preferable to other sugary drinks.
- Baby bottles should only contain expressed milk, infant formula or water.
- Introduce a cup to an infant by 6-8 months.

Topic Introduction

This section introduces children to appropriate drinks and covers:

- *Everyday* and *sometimes* drinks.
- Water as the preferred drink.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this section children will be able to identify that:

- There are *everyday* and *sometimes* drinks as well as foods.
- *Everyday* drinks help to build strong, healthy teeth and bones.
- *Sometimes* drinks are best kept to mealtimes.
- Water and milk are the best drinks for healthy teeth.

Things you will need

Magazines, drink bottles.



Activities



Classroom discussion

QUESTION

Why is water good for you?

List some *everyday* drinks

List some *sometimes* drinks

When is it best to drink *sometimes* drinks?

ANSWER

Water helps keep the body healthy and also washes out the mouth after eating.

Water, milk.

Fizzy drinks, cordial and fruit juices.

During mealtimes.

2 Magazines, drink bottles

Make a collection of *everyday* and *sometimes* drinks using pictures and drink bottles, separating them into two groups.

3

Role-play shopping where children buy/sell *everyday* drinks.

4

Recite the "Cup and Saucer" rhyme.

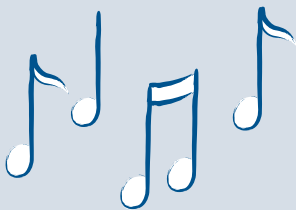
"Cup and Saucer" rhyme (Queensland Health, 1997)

Here is a saucer
Here is a cup
Pour in the milk
And drink it up

Reproduced with the permission of Queensland Health

5

Sing the "Drink Well Song" with the children



Drink Well Song

Eat well drink well clean well
That's the simple trick
Eat well drink well clean well
To get your smile to stick

Eat well – how 'bout you chomp on veggies?
Drink well – how 'bout you sip some milk?
Clean well – brush, brush with fluoride
Teeth will feel like silk

SUGGESTION:

Make up smoothies (a blend of milk, fruit and yoghurt).

EVERYDAY DRINKS

Water

Milk

- Soy-based calcium enriched foods can be a substitute for dairy products. The Recommended Dietary Intake of calcium for children aged 1-3 years is 700mg per day and 800mg for children aged 4-7 years (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003b).

SOMETIMES DRINKS

Fruit juice

Fruit juice drinks

Cordials

Soft drinks

Syrup drinks

Sports drinks

5. CLEAN WELL



KEY MESSAGES:

The *Oral Health Guidelines* (DHS, 2003) state:

- Clean your teeth at least twice a day after meals.
- Brush gently and thoroughly with a fluoride toothpaste and soft compact head toothbrush.

Children:

- Use a low fluoride toothpaste from two to six years of age unless otherwise recommended by a dental professional.
- An adult should assist a young child to brush.

Topic Introduction

This section introduces children to the importance of toothbrushing and covers:

- How often.
- What to use.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this section children will be able to identify that:

- Teeth should be cleaned at least twice a day (after meals and before bed).
- A pea-sized amount of low-fluoride toothpaste should be used.
- It is important to use a small soft toothbrush.
- Every surface of every tooth should be cleaned.

Classroom discussion



QUESTION

Why should you brush your teeth?

How often should you brush your teeth?

How much toothpaste should you put on your toothbrush?

What should you do with the toothpaste after toothbrushing?

Who should help you brush your teeth?

ANSWER

Brushing helps to prevent dental decay (holes in teeth) and keeps your mouth fresh and clean.

Twice a day, (after meals and before bed).

A pea-sized amount.

Spit it out into the sink.

Mum, Dad, Grandparent, other adult.

2

Ask the children to hold up their index fingers. With their pretend toothbrush (finger) encourage them to mime brushing their teeth in a circular motion.

3

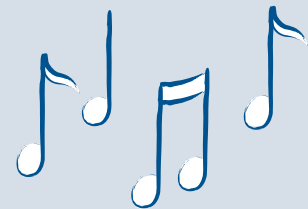
Ask the children to put up their hand if they have a blue/red etc, toothbrush?

4

Sing this song with the children

Brush, Brush, Brush Your Teeth (To the tune of Merrily Merrily)

Brush, brush, brush your teeth
Two times every day
Brush them over up and down
Gently all the way



6. PLAY WELL

KEY MESSAGES:

The *Oral Health Guidelines* (DHS, 2003) state:

- Wear a professionally fitted mouthguard when playing and training for sport where there is a risk of dental injury.

Topic Introduction

This section introduces children to playing safely and covers:

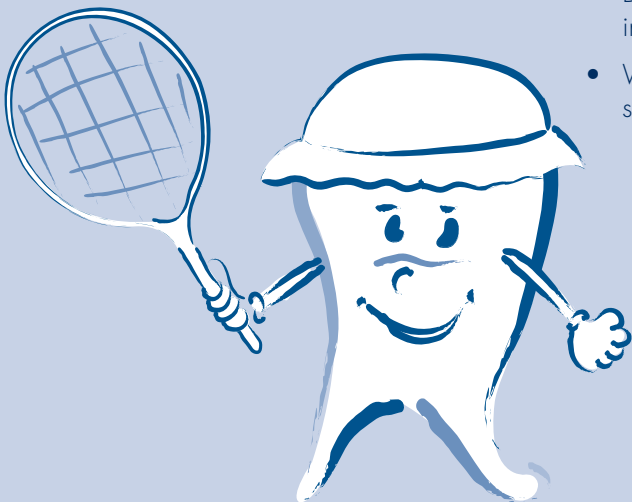
- Safe playing environments.
- How to protect teeth from injury.

On completion of this section children will be able to identify that:

- It is dangerous to move around with food and objects in the mouth.
- Child care centres and preschools are safe environments for playing.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:

- Consideration should be given to protective surfacing and age appropriate equipment in the playground.
- Children should be taught to play safely and be supervised by a responsible adult.
- Discourage children from moving around with food/objects in their mouths.
- Where a dental injury is sustained, professional dental advice should be sought immediately.



Classroom discussion



QUESTION

What must you do to be careful in the bathroom when brushing your teeth?

When is it important to be careful of your teeth?

Why is it important to sit down for meals?

ANSWER

Stand in front of the basin to brush teeth. Stand still rather than walking about. Keep water in the basin as much as possible, to prevent puddles and falls.

When playing games outside, playing on equipment, playing sport.

It is safer to use spoons, forks and cups when you are seated.

2 Sing the "Dear Liza Tooth Song" with the children.



Dear Liza Tooth Song (To the tune of Dear Liza)

There are teeth in my mouth dear Henry, dear Henry
There are teeth in my mouth dear Henry, good teeth

With what do you clean them dear Liza, dear Liza?
With what do you clean them dear Liza, with what?

With a brush and fluoride paste dear Henry, dear Henry
With a brush and fluoride paste dear Henry, cleans well

And how do you keep them dear Liza, dear Liza?
And how do you keep them dear Liza, just how?

I eat fruit and veggies dear Henry, dear Henry
I eat fruit and veggies dear Henry, eat well

Do you have any helpers dear Liza, dear Liza?
Do you have any helpers dear Liza, some friends?

Yes, I go to the dentist dear Henry, dear Henry
Yes, I go to the dentist dear Henry, my friend

Can I do that for my teeth dear Liza, dear Liza?
Can I do that for my teeth dear Liza, with mine?

Yes just Eat Well and Drink Well dear Henry, dear Henry
Play Safely and Clean Well, dear Henry that's it!



What to do if a tooth is knocked out

Deciduous (Baby) Teeth

If a deciduous (baby) tooth is knocked out, do not place it back in the socket. This is not advisable because deciduous teeth which have been replaced tend to fuse themselves to the bone of the socket. Also, the permanent tooth underneath can be damaged when the deciduous tooth is replaced.

The treatment for a deciduous tooth which is knocked out is:

1. Do not replace the tooth back in the socket.
2. Seek dental advice as soon as possible – take any tooth fragments with you to the dental professional.

Permanent teeth

If a permanent tooth is knocked out and is replaced in the socket it has a good chance of survival. Every minute the tooth is out of the socket decreases the chance of the tooth surviving.

Dental advice should be sought straight away.

The treatment for a permanent tooth which is knocked out is:

1. Find the tooth.
2. Handle the tooth by the crown.
3. If root has debris on it, gently rinse the tooth in milk or normal saline solution for a few seconds only.
4. Do not attempt to clean the tooth by scrubbing or using cleaning agents.
5. Do not let the tooth become dry.
6. Replace the tooth immediately if the patient is conscious. Make sure it is put back facing the right way around – look at the other teeth. Hold the tooth in place with some aluminium foil and/or by gently biting on a handkerchief.
7. Contact your dental professional immediately.
8. Consideration should be given to a tetanus injection – seek dental/medical advice.

If you cannot replace a permanent tooth in its socket:

1. Store the tooth in milk, normal saline solution or wrap the tooth in plastic cling wrap.
2. Seek dental help immediately as it is important that the tooth be replaced as quickly as possible (DHS 2000b).



7. STAY WELL

DENTAL CLINIC



KEY MESSAGES:

The *Oral Health Guidelines* (DHS, 2003) state:

- Have regular dental check-ups – don't wait for a problem.
- Dental check-ups start with toddlers.
- Seek advice about how often you should have a dental check-up.
- Don't delay if you have a problem – have it checked.
- Soon after adult back teeth appear, have them checked, as they may need sealants.
- Protect your face from the sun.

Topic Introduction

This section introduces children to dental visits and other healthy habits and covers:

- When to have a dental check-up.
- The importance of dental check-ups.
- The importance of wearing a hat and sunscreen.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this section children will be able to identify that:

- Teeth should be checked by a dental professional.
- Dental visits are fun and easy.
- Sucking thumbs and fingers can cause teeth to grow out of line.
- Sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat can help protect the face and mouth.

Things you will need

Play doh, shells, egg cartons, paint, chair, appointment book (notebook and pencil), gowns (art smocks, business shirt), bibs (kitchen paper), sunglasses.

Additional Suggestions: Encourage children not to suck on thumbs, fingers, dummies and toys (DHS, 1998).

Visits to your centre by a Dental Professional: These visits can be effective in communicating important oral health messages and can assist children's services to:

- (i) support positive parental influences over children's health and health behaviours;
- (ii) address the topic of oral health with parents and carers; and
- (iii) provide oral health materials to parents



Classroom discussion

QUESTION

Why should you have a dental check-up?

Who should you visit to have your teeth checked?

What happens when you have your teeth checked?

Why shouldn't you suck your thumb or fingers?

What do you put on to protect your face from the sun?

ANSWER

To keep your teeth healthy.

Dentist/dental therapist.

Introduce the dentist/dental therapist as a health helper, one of many helpful people in the community.

Ride in the dental chair, lie back and relax, put on sunglasses (just like at the beach), open your mouth wide (like a crocodile) and have your teeth counted/checked.

Your teeth may grow out of line.

Hat and appropriate sunscreen.

2 Play doh, shells, egg cartons, paint

Make a model mouth using either play doh and shells or painted egg cartons. Then conduct a mouth check by counting all the teeth.

3

Take the children on an excursion to the dentist/dental therapist (parental consent required).

4

Invite a dental professional to talk to parents and children.

Note: It is important to talk to parents as well, as they have the greatest opportunity to influence children's habits and attitudes towards oral health.

5 Chair, 5 children, appointment book (notebook and pencil), gowns (art smocks, business shirt), bibs (kitchen paper), sunglasses

Role-play a visit to the dentist.

Set up an area (home corner or equivalent) as a dental clinic.

Select 5 children: a dentist/dental therapist, dental assistant, child/patient, parent, and receptionist.

Role-play making an appointment, sitting in the waiting room, sitting in the dental chair and having teeth counted. Ensure that children keep fingers out of each others' mouths.

Recite the "Dental Visits Rhyme" with the children.



Dental Visits Rhyme (Queensland Health, 1997)

(All children stand to mime)

Here are the dentist's glasses (circle fingers around eyes)

Here is the dentist's gown (run hands down body)

Here are the dentist's mask and gloves (mime putting on mask and gloves)

Now we can all sit down (all sit)

I am in the dental chair (still seated, put legs out in front)

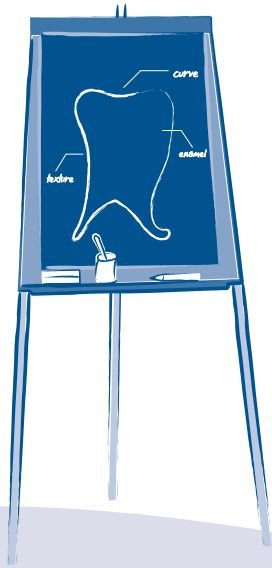
Ready to be checked (smile or open wide)

The dentist puts my glasses on (circle fingers around eyes)

And a bib around my neck (mime putting on the bib)

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8. ORAL HEALTH INFORMATION



This section provides information for teachers and carers to support the different activities pages included in this resource.

THE MOUTH

- A healthy mouth is necessary for eating, speaking and smiling and contributes to a person's physical appearance and self-esteem. In order to maintain a healthy mouth it is important to establish good oral hygiene practices and continue these throughout life.
- Early childhood is a time when parents are receptive to information and advice, particularly on the subject of oral health when their child is teething.
- There is value in regular discussions about teeth in the learning environment so that children understand the importance of their teeth and the need to care for them.

EAT WELL

- Eating a wide variety of nutritious foods is important, especially during childhood when growth and development are occurring. Childhood is a time when eating habits are established so it is important for parents and carers to encourage healthy eating behaviours (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003b).
- Frequent consumption of sweet sticky foods can contribute to dental caries (decay) (DHS, 2000b). It is the frequency of consumption of sugary foods and drinks that constitutes the risk of dental decay rather than the amount. Foods and drinks containing added sugars should be limited, especially between meals. If consumed, they are best eaten at mealtimes rather than between meals (DHS, 2003).
- In this resource, healthy and nutritious foods that are suitable for regular consumption are referred to as *everyday* foods. Sweet foods and food items that are high in added sugar content are referred to as *sometimes* foods. Food labels provide further information.

DRINK WELL

- An adequate intake of fluids is important at all ages. Children should be encouraged to drink tap water when thirsty, in preference to other fluids. Milk is an important source of calcium, protein and other essential vitamins and minerals. More than 600ml of milk may reduce a child's appetite for other foods needed for growth and development (DHS, 2001). Milk and flavoured milks are preferable to some other drinks, such as juice, soft drink or cordial.
- Early childhood caries (nursing or bottle decay) may be caused by the inappropriate use of feeding bottles. It is also recommended that you do not allow your baby to go to sleep while sucking the breast. A brown/black stain caused by prolonged and frequent exposure of teeth to liquids that contain sugars (such as fruit juice, soft drinks and cordials) appears on infants' front teeth (DHS, 2000b).
- Feeding should always be under adult supervision and the feeding bottle should be taken away when the infant has had enough. Baby bottles should only be filled with breast milk, appropriate infant formula or boiled water. Exclusive breastfeeding should be encouraged, supported and promoted for the first six months of life. It is recommended that breastfeeding continues until 12 months of age and thereafter as long as mutually desired (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003b).
- A feeding cup should be introduced to the baby by 6-8 months of age. At every age, it is best to limit sugar intake to mealtimes as the salivary flow is higher at these times and will assist to 'rinse' the mouth of additional sugars (DHS, 1998).
- Water fluoridation is recognised as an effective method of preventing dental caries (DHS, 2000a). Studies over many years have shown that water fluoridation significantly reduces dental caries in both children and adults. People of all ages benefit from water fluoridation (DHS, 2003).

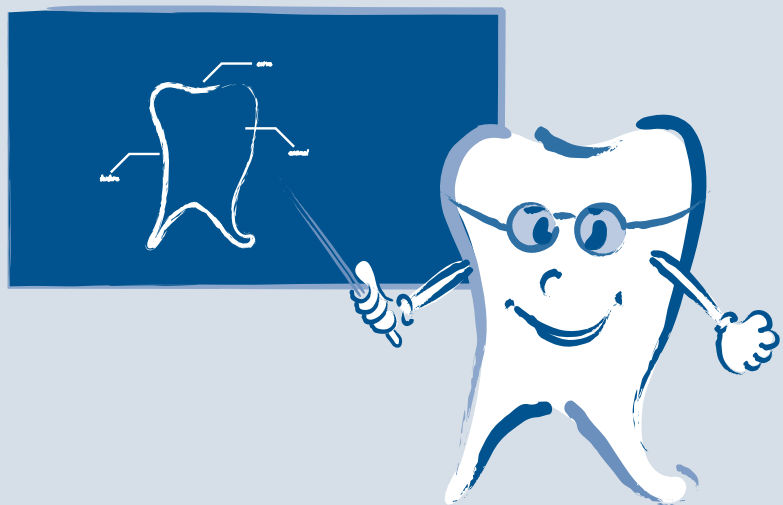
CLEAN WELL

- Thorough toothbrushing is required for the maintenance of healthy teeth and gums. A gentle scrub technique with a soft, small headed tooth brush is effective for most people and is easy to teach (DHS, 2003). Fluoride in toothpaste assists in the prevention of dental decay.
- Most children have insufficient manual dexterity to brush effectively until they are at least six or seven years of age. Parents should assist young children to brush their teeth thoroughly at least twice a day using a small soft toothbrush. The best way to do this is to sit the child on the lap or to stand behind the child, tilting the child's head upwards so that all tooth surfaces can be brushed using a gentle scrubbing motion (DHS, 2000b).
- Low fluoride toothpaste is encouraged for young children. A pea-sized amount of low fluoride toothpaste should be smeared onto the toothbrush (DHS, 2003). Children should be encouraged to spit the toothpaste out.

PLAY WELL

- Injuries to the lips, gums, teeth and jaw can contribute to oral health problems. Principles of safety should apply when children engage in physical activities of all kinds. In older children, this includes wearing a mouthguard while playing and training for sport or recreational pursuits where there is a risk of dental injury. Children should be encouraged to play safely and where appropriate, with the supervision of an adult. Where a dental injury is sustained, professional dental advice should be sought immediately (DHS, 2003).

- The value of dental examinations in maintaining oral health is established (DHS, 2003).
- Dental professionals who are likely to examine children's mouths include dentists and dental therapists. A dental assistant will assist the dental professional. Maternal and child health nurses and/or medical practitioners may also provide oral health advice (DHS, 1998).
- At the first dental visit, the dental professional will probably count the child's teeth, check for signs of infant feeding caries and examine the whole mouth.
- A dental sealant is a plastic film professionally applied to the pits and fissures of the back teeth. The sealant assists in the prevention of access of plaque and plaque acids to the enamel surface of teeth. Dental sealants are of value in the prevention of dental caries (DHS, 2000a).
- Sucking on thumbs, fingers and toys is a normal behaviour for babies and toddlers. Most children stop sucking between two and four years of age. However, prolonged sucking on thumbs, fingers and dummies beyond 6-7 years of age (when permanent teeth begin to come through) may cause teeth to grow out of line. This can affect the child's appearance and their ability to bite and speak properly (DHS, 1998).
- Children may be more likely to suck their thumbs when they are tired, stressed, hungry and/or in a new or threatening environment. They often combine the sucking habit with another comforting activity such as carrying a personal blanket or toy while sucking their thumb or playing with their hair. Rewards (such as hugs, praise and stickers) can help encourage children to stop sucking. Care must be taken not to criticise children, however, as this can be counterproductive (DHS, 1998). Encourage parents to speak to a dental professional or maternal and child health nurse for further advice.
- Parents and carers should assist children to protect their faces from the sun due to the potential for skin tissue damage. Solar ultraviolet radiation is a risk factor for cancer of the lip (DHS, 2003).



9. SUPPORTING ORAL HEALTH THROUGH POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This section of the resource provides helpful suggestions and advice regarding the development and implementation of oral health policies in children's services.

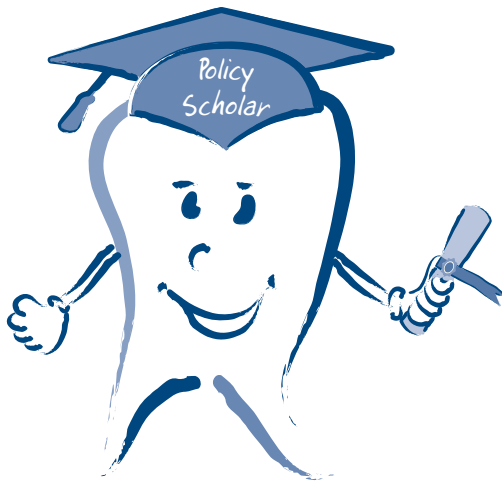
Policy development is a key element of oral health promotion. Health promotion policies aim to create environments that support good health.

Examples of oral health policies in early childhood settings include daily toothbrushing, healthy eating and injury prevention policies.

Children's services are required to include oral hygiene in their daily program as part of the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System.

This section includes:

- Quality Improvement and Accreditation System requirements for Long Day Care Centres.
- Steps towards developing oral health policies.
- Examples of oral health policies.



9.1 Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for Long Day Care Centres

The QIAS is a Commonwealth Government initiative linked to Child Care Benefit approval for centre-based long day care. The QIAS is administered by the National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc (NCAC).

The QIAS aims to provide children in centre-based child care throughout Australia with high quality care that best promotes their learning and development in the vital early years. The broad objective of the QIAS is to ensure that children in long day care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that foster all aspects of their development. It does this by defining quality child care and by providing a framework for measuring quality in a child care setting (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001).

As described in Principle 8.3 of the QIAS guide, the standards required for QIAS accreditation of Long Day Care Centres include:

- Staff consistently set an example of good health and hygiene practices that are based on recommendations from recognised health authorities.
- Staff actively promote each child's hand washing and drying procedures before eating; after toileting; after handling animals; after wiping noses; and after other unhygienic practices.
- Staff talk with children about health and hygiene practices.
- Staff encourage children to flush toilets after use as required.

- Toilets and hand-washing facilities are easily accessible to each child.
- The centre has a policy on dental care based on current recommendations from recognised dental health authorities.
- Staff implement the centre's dental care policy consistently.
- Arrangements are made for health care professionals to visit the centre to talk with staff, children and/or families about hygiene and dental care.
- When necessary, staff demonstrate for children specific hygiene procedures and explain the reasons for them.
- The centre liaises with families to establish hygiene and dental care practices that are workable at home and at the centre.
- The centre systematically incorporates information on hygiene and dental care into the children's learning program.
- The centre provides families with information on hygiene and dental care practices that are recommended by recognised health and dental care authorities.
- The information on hygiene and dental care is available in the main home language(s) of families using the centre (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003a).

9.2 Steps towards developing an oral health policy

Developing an oral health policy will be a team effort. Policy development can be most effective with the support and input of a working group comprising individuals with particular interests in the area. A working group will often comprise children's services staff members, parents and dental or other health professionals or someone else with experience. Children's services providing care for diverse cultural groups may benefit from involving appropriate representation. Ensuring representation of parents' groups and staff members will acknowledge their contributions as valuable resources.

STEPS:

I. **Consider existing barriers to good oral hygiene:**

Is there adequate access to healthy food options at your centre?
Is there a general understanding of the importance of oral health?
Is anything hindering your ability to promote and support oral health?

II. **Develop a working group to assist with the policy development:**

Invite representative/s of the parent group, interested staff member/s, local dental professional/s, and if possible, someone with policy-making experience.

III. **Identify what needs exist:**

Has there previously been an interest in oral health at your centre?

SUGGESTION:

Hold a health information session to bring parents and professionals together to talk about health issues concerning the children in the centre.

IV. **Collate information**

What are the particular issues and concerns regarding oral health in your centre?

V. **Consult with the working group**

Have all issues been addressed and all needs covered?
Are there aspects of additional information or support required?



VI. Write a draft policy

Make it practical, specific and measurable, and give it a review date.

VII. Circulate the policy for comment

Invite the working party and other stakeholders to review the draft policy.

Is the aim and purpose of the policy clear?

Does the policy provide the basis for change?

VIII. Write a final policy

Consider comments and feedback provided, and discuss anything that may be contentious.

Consider the costs and implications of adopting the policy.

Establish responsibilities for its implementation and review.

IX. Formally adopt the policy

Present the policy to the working group for their consideration.

Seek agreement on the policy wording, budget and implementation expectations.

SUGGESTION:

Post a flier in the parent waiting area or in a newsletter, informing/reminding parents of the new oral health policy in your setting.

X. Implement the policy

Introduce the policy formally to the setting, by communicating it to all staff, parents and other stakeholders.

XI. Monitor the implementation of the policy

Establish a process and responsibility for ongoing review (Health Education Authority 1999).

For additional support and information regarding the development of effective oral health policies, refer to the Victorian Department of Human Services 2000 booklet, *Oral Health Promotion: A Practical Guide for Children's Services*.

9.3 Oral health policy examples and suggestions

Examples of policy statements which may be helpful to you in developing your own oral health policy are listed:

- A. "Fairbanks Kindergarten" is committed to good oral health. The staff and management encourage and promote oral health during the daily program by:

Eat Well

- Encouraging and supporting the principles of healthy eating for all children.

Drink Well

- Serving children water or milk (infants are fed expressed milk, infant formula or milk) at morning tea, lunchtime and afternoon tea.

Clean Well

- Reinforcing to children, staff and parents the value of good oral hygiene and toothbrushing.
- Including a toothbrushing program that incorporates appropriate hygiene education.

Play Well

- Ensuring children play under adult supervision.

Stay Well

- Providing information to parents and carers regarding the importance of regular dental check-ups.
- Ensuring children wear appropriate protection (sunscreen and hat) to protect their faces from the sun.
- Practising good oral hygiene with the children.

B. “Chatswood Child Care Centre” actively promotes good health. We promote healthy eating in the following ways:

- Staff, parents and children participate in menu planning.
- The weekly menu is appropriate to children’s growth and developmental needs.
- The weekly menu considers cultural needs, and is varied.
- Special dietary requirements are met with appropriate consultation (with parents and/or health professionals).
- The weekly menu is on display to parents and staff.
- Sugary foods and drinks are restricted.
- Parents are asked not to provide chocolates or lollies.
- Staff initiate discussion with children about food, health and nutrition.
- The service promotes opportunities for positive interaction during mealtimes.
- Adding sweet substances to dummies/feeding bottles is discouraged.
- Water is readily available at all times.

SUGGESTION:



Special occasions/birthdays

When cakes or sweets are brought for children to share:

- Staff are to remind the children that these are *sometimes* foods.
- Children are encouraged to drink water after eating sweets (swishing the water around their teeth).
- Fresh fruit is served after sweet foods.
- Sweets will sometimes be sent home for parents to offer at an appropriate “sweets” time (e.g. after meals).

A cake is only one of many ways to celebrate a special occasion. Other ways of celebrating include:

- Telling a special story
- Lighting and blowing out candles
- A group time show and tell
- Singing and dancing.

Toothbrushing programs

Toothbrushing programs are encouraged in early childhood settings, especially in areas where levels of dental decay are high and the town water supply is not fluoridated. A full guide to implementing a toothbrushing program is outlined in the DHS publication, *Oral Health Promotion: A Practical Guide for Children’s Services* (www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/oral/index.htm). Refer to pages 19-20 in the booklet.

10. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHER INFORMATION

Additional resources can help to bring your lessons and presentations to life for the children. A list of suggested items appropriate to oral health promotion and where you can find them, is provided below.

Dental Health Services Victoria also offers a wide range of appropriate resources for loan or purchase (see Contacts, page 39).

Items and examples	Suggested sources
Role plays <i>Eating/Buying different foods:</i> Plastic/wooden fruit, vegetables and other foods, food packaging. Shopping basket/calico bag. Dental visits: Dental chair – cushioned high chair, sun/beach chair. Practitioner and nurse gowns – white art smock or business shirt. Bibs and masks – use kitchen paper and threads of wool. Appointment book. Clear protective glasses. <i>Note: Ensure all items have child-safe clips and fasteners and are clean.</i>	– Early childhood resources shops/companies. – Discount stores, toy shops. – Enquire at general practice clinics for spare garments and accessories. – Look in opportunity shops for garments and accessories.
Pictures • Collect suitable pictures for collages, posters, art work and displays (include a mix of cultures). Possible sources: magazines, catalogues (e.g. Target™), posters, calendars and early childhood magazines/newsletters. • Take photos of the children in your setting (parental consent required). • Make your own oral health photo collection/series featuring the children in your care. Label the photographs using the key messages. You could use this as a display for parents, waiting areas or to remind children of earlier oral health lessons and discussions.	Ask parents, local medical centres and newsagencies, for old magazines, posters, calendars, etc.
Toys/Dolls • Set of teeth and big toothbrush for play time. • Puppet – Animate story time by using a puppet/doll with teeth large enough to point to, talk about and refer to in demonstrations.	– Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV). – Home-made.

CONTACTS



Commercial supplies

Books

Titles such as:

Does a Lion Brush?, by Fred Ehrlich, 2002 (Blue Apple books).

Freddy Visits the Dentist, by Nicola Smee, 2000 (Orchard Books).

I Know Why I Brush My Teeth, by Kate Rowan, 2000 (Walker Books).

The Tooth Book, by Dr Seuss, 1984 (Harper Collins).

Topsy and Tim go to the Dentist, by Jean and Gareth Adamson, 2003 (Lady Bird, Penguin Books).

Your Smile Counts, 1991 (Colgate Oral Care).

- Specialist educational books/toys suppliers.
- Children's toy shops.
- Bookshops.
- Libraries.
- Colgate Oral Care.

Dental puzzles and food puzzles

Such as:

4 Layer Dentist Puzzle (4x12 pieces), from Modern Teaching Aids.

My Hygiene Puzzles (4x6 pieces in box), from Judius.

Audio-Visual

Such as:

The Adventures of Wiggly Tooth, Bright Smiles, Bright Futures, 2002 (Colgate Oral Care).

Play school – Everybody Sing, a 1 hr music video including "The Toothbrush Song" (ABC).

- Children's toy shops.
- Children's resource centres.
- DHSV.
- ABC shops and centres.

Staff reference

Oral health information sheets for parents.
Translated tooth tips (suitable for parents).

Oral Health Promotion: A Practical Guide for Children's Services, Department of Human Services, 2000.

Child Nutrition Tip Sheets: Victorian Department of Human Services, 2001.

Provided in your pack, and at www.dhsv.org.au/ResourcePack.pdf

Can be viewed and downloaded at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/oral/index.htm

www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition/projects/maternal.htm

Oral Health Information

Name	What's available	Contact
Health Promotion Division Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV).	Oral health information and oral health promotion materials.	www.dhsv.org.au/resources.asp (see Oral Health Promotion Materials) email: healthpromotion@dhsv.org.au ph. 9341 1005 Located at: Ground Floor, Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne 720 Swanston St. Carlton 3053.
Community Care Division, Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS).	Information for children's services providers & parents.	www.dhs.vic.gov.au/ earlychildhood
Public Health Division, DHS.	Oral health promotion site, publications and information.	www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/oral/ index.htm
Local Government, Health Promotion Officer.	Health information and advice, specific to your area.	See local government listings in your telephone directory
Better Health Channel.	Health information directory, including oral/dental health.	www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au See "Mouth and teeth" under Topics, Health conditions
Health Translations Directory.	Multi-lingual health information.	www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au Enter "dental" under keyword.

Oral Health Products/Resources

Name	What's available	Contact
Health Promotion Division Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV).	A wide variety of oral health promotion and educational resources and loan items.	See above.
Colgate Oral Care.	Oral care brochures; "kinder kits" (video, stickers, poster). Interactive website for children and teachers.	Health Promotion Division, DHSV or www.colgatebsbf.com
Oral B.	Selection of literature, products and resources for children's oral care.	ph. 1800 641 820 (toll free) Dental essentials brochure online: http://www.oralb.com/pdfs/ start_early.pdf
Halas Dental.	Low cost Colgate toothpaste and toothbrushes for children's services.	ph. 1300 658 822 (local call cost).
Dental Outlook.	Oral health posters, balloons, colouring sheets, stickers – suitable for displays or events.	ph. (02) 9557 9330 Call for a catalogue.



Local Dental Professionals

Name	What's available	Contact
Dental Health Services Victoria – School Dental Service. – Community Dental Clinics.	Local dental service information.	ph. 1 300 360 054 (local call cost) Directs all calls to closest office.
Australian Dental Association	Dental health information, FAQs, teacher and parent resources, your nearest dentist.	ph. 9826 8318 www.ada.org.au See Consumer Information.
Dental Health Unit (DHS) – Prechool Dental Program	Some municipalities offer a Preschool Dental Program for preschool aged children	ph. 9616 8467

Early Childhood Resources

Name	What's available	Contact
Free Kindergarten Association Children's Services (Multicultural Resource Centre).	Multicultural resource library and referral service for first language needs and bilingual support for migrant children.	www.fka.com.au ph. 9428 4471 9-11 Stewart St, Richmond 3121 email: fkacs@fka.com.au
Modern Teaching Aids Teachers Resource Book.	Wide range of toys, models, games and teaching aids for purchase.	ph. 1 800 251 497 (toll free) www.teaching.com.au Catalogue online
Judius Early Childhood and School Resources.	Wide range of toys, models, games and teaching aids for purchase.	ph. 1 800 060 775 (toll free) www.judius.com.au Catalogue online

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ORAL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR VICTORIANS

Oral Health is Better Health

Eat Well

- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods.
- If you eat sugary foods and sweets, limit their intake – especially between meals.
- Enjoy healthy snacks.

Drink Well

- Drink plenty of tap water – especially if fluoridated.
- If you drink acidic and sugary drinks such as soft drinks, sports drinks, cordials and fruit juices, limit their consumption and frequency.
- Milk and flavoured milks are preferable to other sugary drinks.
- Baby bottles should only contain expressed milk, infant formula or water.
- Introduce a cup to an infant by 6-8 months.

Clean Well

- Clean your teeth at least twice a day after meals.
- Brush gently and thoroughly with a fluoride toothpaste and soft compact head toothbrush.
Children:
 - Use a low fluoride toothpaste from two to six years of age unless otherwise recommended by a dental professional.
 - An adult should assist a young child to brush.Adults:
 - Seek advice about cleaning between your teeth.
 - Clean dentures thoroughly every day.

Dental Visits

- Have regular dental check-ups – don't wait for a problem.
- Dental check-ups start with toddlers.
- Seek advice about how often you should have a dental check-up.
- Those without natural teeth also need check-ups.
- Don't delay if you have a problem – have it checked.
- Soon after adult back teeth appear, have them checked, as they may need sealants.

Healthy Habits

- Quit smoking for good.
- Limit your alcohol intake if you choose to drink.
- If you can't clean your teeth, chew sugarless gum after meals.
- Protect your face from the sun.

Play Safely

- Wear a professionally fitted mouthguard when playing and training for sport where there is a risk of dental injury.
- Some sports and recreational activities require a full-faced helmet or face guard.

Dental Health Services Victoria

School Dental Service

Tel: 1300 360 054

Community Dental Program

Tel: 1300 360 054

Health Promotion

Dental Health Services Victoria

720 Swanston St

Carlton Vic 3053

Tel: (03) 9341 1005

Fax: (03) 9341 1011