



# connected

Partnerships between community  
dental agencies and Smiles 4 Miles



dental health  
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oral health for better health



# About this document

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The purpose of this document is to outline strategies for Smiles 4 Miles coordinators and community dental agencies (agencies) to work together to ensure that Smiles 4 Miles children can access an oral health visit. This collaborative approach builds on the success of two existing DHSV programs (Smiles 4 Miles and the Community Dental Program) to reach children and families at high risk of poor oral health.

The Purchasing Agreement between DHSV and agencies includes a target to increase Smiles 4 Miles referrals. This document will provide strategies to work together to ensure this target is met and exceeded.

## Part A

- Will focus on strategies for improving access and **increasing referrals** of Smiles 4 Miles children

## Part B

- Will focus on strategies for **tracking referrals** of Smiles 4 Miles children in Titanium

## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the agencies who provided case studies for this toolkit:

- Ballarat Health Services and Ballarat Community Health
- Colac Area Health
- EACH
- Plenty Valley Community Health
- Merri Health



# Background

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## Smiles 4 Miles

Smiles 4 Miles is a prevention program aimed at improving the oral health of preschool aged children in high risk areas across Victoria. The program aims to create environments that support and promote the oral health of young children, by using three key messages - Drink well, Eat well and Clean well. Every child participating in the program receives a toothbrush and toothpaste to support the oral health messages.

A primary objective of the program is to increase children's access to oral health services by enhancing partnerships between Smiles 4 Miles coordinators and local agencies. In 2016, almost 30,000 children and their families were engaged in the Smiles 4 Miles program across high risk areas in Victoria.

[See further information on the Smiles 4 Miles program here.](#)

## Smiles 4 Miles Coordinators

A Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator is employed by the organisation DHSV funds to implement the Smiles 4 Miles program.

Coordinators come from diverse professional backgrounds such as health promotion, dietetics, oral health, speech pathology and community development.

The Smiles 4 Miles coordinator is responsible for engaging with local early childhood services and supporting them to achieve their Smiles 4 Miles award.



## Community dental agencies

Community dental agencies are funded by DHSV to deliver oral health services that are high quality, cost effective, sustainable and responsive to people's needs. The oral health team plays a vital role in preventing and managing tooth decay in children.

There are more than 80 community dental clinics located throughout metropolitan Melbourne and regional and rural Victoria. They are attached to community health services or hospitals.

[Click here to see locations.](#)

## Working together for better outcomes

Prevention is an important component of the oral health care continuum for children and their families. By working together, Smiles 4 Miles coordinators and agencies can increase reach and strengthen their prevention efforts.

### Benefits to agencies

- Increase the number of children who have had an oral health check and treatment if required
- Provide preventative oral health advice to children and families
- Identify children at risk of developing tooth decay and refer for follow up treatment if required
- Meet the target to increase referrals for Smiles 4 Miles children, as detailed in the Purchasing Agreement for Dental Health Services
- Claim DWAs (Dental Weighted Activity Units) for any services provided
- Create a positive dental experience for both child and parent.

### Benefits to Smiles 4 Miles services

Working with the local dental agency allows early childhood services participating in Smiles 4 Miles to achieve one or more of the program's award criteria:

Criterion No. 7: Provide families with information on dental services and healthy eating initiatives.

Criterion No. 6: Engage with families around the Drink well, Eat well and Clean well key messages.

Criterion No. 5: Conduct learning experiences with children around the Drink well, Eat well and Clean well key messages.

### Benefits to the local community

By raising awareness of the local dental services available to families, it is hoped this will help increase attendance at clinics and subsequently improve the oral health of the community.

# Part A

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## Strategies for improving access and increasing referrals

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### Program description

Many community dental agencies offer outreach programs and conduct oral health checks or screening within community settings. Linking early childhood services participating in Smiles 4 Miles with their local agency can ensure children receive an oral health check. It also helps to familiarise families with the dental service and place children on a recall and reminder system, allowing for a relationship to be built over time.

### 1. Screenings

These can involve either:

- a. the local dental service staff visiting the early childhood service; or
- b. the early childhood service visiting the local dental service.

### Screenings

A screening appointment usually occurs with:

- Groups of 10-15 children, aged 3-5 years (preschool aged)
- 15-20 minutes allowed for each child - for screening and conversation with family (if present).

They can include:

#### **Examinations:**

An examination (check-up) assesses teeth, gums, jaw and mouth. Examinations are an excellent way to find any problems early and make a plan for necessary treatment as soon as possible.

**Oral hygiene instruction:**

Oral hygiene instruction gives advice on the right toothpaste and products to use, and how to effectively remove build-ups (plaque) on teeth to prevent decay.

Thorough toothbrushing with the correct technique is needed for healthy teeth and gums. It is important to start good oral hygiene in early years, so that habits are correctly learnt. Good oral hygiene at an early age can reduce the likelihood of decay and gum disease.

**Topical fluoride:**

Fluoride is widely used to prevent tooth decay. Fluoride is a common mineral that helps build strong teeth and bones. Fluoride treatments do not prevent decay from forming but can control the rate at which decay develops or reverse the early signs of decay (white spot lesions).

If needed, fluoride varnish may be applied to a child's teeth where white spot lesions, active decay or tooth sensitivity is present, or for children who are identified at moderate to high risk of developing decay.

Treatment is painless, with the varnish applied to the teeth using a brush or cotton bud. This usually takes about 2 minutes and children cannot eat, drink, or rinse for 30 minutes after the fluoride application.

**Dietary advice:**

Involves oral health staff providing general dietary advice around reducing their risk factors for oral disease.

- A family handout may be provided for the child to take home.





## Administration

How screening is conducted varies by agency and depends largely on clinic practices and the available workforce. To support screening at Smiles 4 Miles early childhood services, the following is recommended:

- Distribute consent forms and information on screening to families - see Appendix 1 for Sample consent form
- Register participating children as a Smiles 4 Miles referral in Titanium
- Complete an Examination report and referral form at the time of screening - see Appendix 2 for sample examination and referral form

## Implementation

Dental Agency	Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator	Early Childhood Service
<p><b>Pre screening</b> Liaise with Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dates and times of visit</li> <li>Staff required</li> <li>Room requirements and whether on or off-site is most suitable.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Portable dental equipment is available in all regions. Contact the ART Team to discuss</p> <p>Provide information to Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator for families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter to family</li> <li>Consent Form; arrange for consent letters to go out at least 6 weeks prior to start date - Appendix 1</li> <li>Contact details of local clinic</li> <li>Register clients into Titanium as a Smiles 4 Miles referral</li> </ul> <p><b>The screening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dental team introduce themselves to children and staff</li> <li>Familiarise children with procedures typically carried out in a dental visit e.g. ride in dental chair, wearing gowns, gloves, masks, bibs and glasses, using mirrors, suction, air and water</li> <li>Conduct screening</li> <li>Discuss key oral health messages with children</li> <li>Demonstrate correct tooth brushing technique (if required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acts as the centralised point of contact</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre screening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss interest in screenings with the early childhood service</li> <li>Describe what is expected of the early childhood service, staff requirements, onsite or off-site, parent consent, potential dates and times</li> <li>If committed, decide on suitable dates and times</li> <li>Provide information to educators from Dental Agency (letter to family, consent form, contact details of local clinic)</li> <li>Collect completed consent forms from early childhood services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pre screening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information about the screenings received from the Dental Clinic to families</li> <li>Disseminate and collect completed consent forms</li> <li>If screenings are to be conducted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Onsite</b> - Arrange suitable space for screenings</li> <li><b>Offsite</b> - Arrange for transportation and consent for children to complete excursion</li> </ul> </li> <li>Give completed consent forms to Dental Agency - this should occur prior to the visits to provide the agency sufficient time to input data into Titanium</li> </ul> <p><b>The screening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support dental team with children who will participate in screening</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and distribute examination report to child and/ or parent and Dental Clinic referral form (if required)</li> <li>• Provide families with information / resources / Dental Clinic referral</li> </ul> <p><b>Post screening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up with families of referred children to ensure treatment appointments are made and attended</li> <li>• Ensure all children who do not require follow up treatment are placed on the appropriate recall interval in Titanium</li> <li>• Titanium Service Detail report</li> <li>• Titanium Patient Detail report</li> </ul>		
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## CASE STUDY - Smiles All Round

*Ballarat Health Services and Ballarat Community Health*

‘Smiles All Round’ is a screening program that provides children attending Smiles 4 Miles participating services with an oral health screen and a referral to their community dental agency if required. In 2015 the dental team at Ballarat Health Services screened 377 preschool aged children at 12 Smiles 4 Miles kindergartens.

**Outcomes:**

- Provides information to children and families about accessing their community dental agency
- Familiarises children with dental checks in a comfortable and familiar environment
- Encourages referrals to the community dental agency

## 2. Kindergarten excursions

### Program description

Kindergarten excursions allow children to be taken on a visit to the local dental agency. The aim of the excursions are to provide kindergarten aged children with a positive experience when visiting the Dental Clinic, and educate children (and sometimes their families too) about oral hygiene practices, and the dental service. By familiarising children and their families with the dental service it is hoped this will assist in reducing fear and anxiety in children (and their families) when visiting a dental professional.

### Implementation

Dental Agency	Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator	Early Childhood Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator on scheduling the excursion</li> <li>• Speaks with children (and families) during excursion</li> </ul> <p>Note: No DWAs available for group oral health education sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes the visit to kindergartens</li> <li>• Schedules dates and times with Dental Clinic and kindergarten</li> <li>• Provide information to educators from Dental Clinic (contact details of local clinic, letter to family)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides support for the process</li> <li>• Promotes the visit to families</li> <li>• Advocates for families to return consent form</li> </ul>



## CASE STUDY - Kinder Kapers

*Colac Area Health*

The 'Kinder Kapers' kindergarten excursion program was introduced by Colac Area Health in late 2010 and now involves all kindergartens in the Colac Otway Shire. Children, their families and teachers visit Colac Area Health for a 'tour' to learn about their local dental service and the importance of oral health including oral health check-ups.

### **Outcomes:**

- Provides children with a positive experience when visiting the dentist
- Raises awareness of the dental services available to families
- Educates parents and children about tooth brushing technique and good oral health behaviours, including healthy eating

### 3. Registration sheets for families

#### Program description

Registration sheets are an easy way to encourage families to make an appointment with their local agency. Working in partnership with services, a registration sheet is displayed in foyers of participating Smiles 4 Miles early childhood services. Families wanting their child to have a dental appointment simply write their name on the registration. Educators return the forms to their Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator, who passes them on to the community dental agency to call families to arrange an appointment.

#### Administration

- ‘I want to be a Clean well kid’ registration sheet - see Appendix 3.

#### Implementation

Dental Agency	Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator	Early Childhood Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaises with Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator regarding frequency of registration sheet to be provided to kindergartens</li> <li>• Phones families of children recorded on kindergarten registration sheet to book them in for a dental appointment</li> <li>• Registers child as a ‘Smiles 4 Miles referral’ in Titanium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides registration sheet to kindergartens twice per year (or a frequency agreed between Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator and dental agency)</li> <li>• Once complete, Coordinator passes this onto Dental Agency for follow up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes local dental agency and encourages families to register their name on the registration sheet provided</li> <li>• Returns registration sheet to Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator</li> </ul>



## CASE STUDY - I want to be a Clean well kid

*Formerly Knox Social and Community Health*

### **EACH**

EACH (formerly Knox Social and Community Health) commenced the Smiles 4 Miles program in 2009. Recognising the importance of linking families of local Smiles 4 Miles early childhood services to the community dental agency, they created the 'I want to be a Clean well kid' registration sheet. EACH displays the registration sheets in the foyer of early childhood services and invite families interested in making a dental appointment to provide their details. The community dental agency then contacts these families to arrange a suitable dental appointment.

### **Outcomes:**

- Makes the process of booking a dental appointment easier for families
- Promotes referrals to the community dental agency from early childhood services participating in Smiles 4 Miles

## 4. Early Childhood Services orientation sessions

### Program description

Orientation sessions are typically held for families entering into a new kindergarten year (often held the year prior in Term 4). The sessions cover a variety of topics relating to the child's kindergarten year. These sessions can be an ideal opportunity to capture the largest number of family members at the service and promote the Smiles 4 Miles program and oral health.

### Implementation

Dental Agency	Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator	Early Childhood Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Invites families to record their name and contact phone number on a registration sheet if they wish to attend a dental appointment</li><li>Once back in the Dental Clinic, contact the families to book them in for an appointment</li><li>Registers child as a 'Smiles 4 Miles referral' in Titanium</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Liaises with the early childhood service and Dental Clinic regarding the date and time for the orientation session</li><li>Attends the orientation session and discusses the program and how families can access their local clinic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Advises Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator of dates and times of orientation sessions and invites Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator along for a session</li></ul>

### Administration

- Registration sheet: Develop your own or you could use the 'I want to be a Clean well kid' form - See Appendix 3.



## Plenty Valley Community Health

The Health Promotion team at Plenty Valley Community Health attend kindergarten orientation sessions to promote Smiles 4 Miles and the importance of visiting the dentist. At these sessions many families report they don't know how to arrange a dental appointment. The health promotion team use these discussions with families as an opportunity to provide information about their community dental agency and encourage families to make an appointment.

### **Outcomes:**

- Provides information to families about their community dental agency
- Promotes referrals to the community dental agency from early childhood services participating in Smiles 4 Miles

# Part B

## Resources to support tracking Smiles 4 Miles referrals in Titanium

Several resources have been developed to help community dental agencies to easily identify children who are attending their clinic from a Smiles 4 Miles early childhood service. Keeping track of the number of children attending the clinic from Smiles 4 Miles services, supports agencies to meet their target (as detailed in their purchasing agreement with DHSV) and supports future program planning.

The following resources are available by contacting your local Smiles 4 Miles coordinator. Agencies are encouraged to adapt or develop appropriate strategies to track Smiles 4 Miles referrals, as required.

### 1. 'I want to be a Clean well kid' form

This registration sheet can be placed in the foyer or on the administration table of an early childhood service to allow families to register their child for a dental appointment.



The form features a header with three cartoon children and the text "I want to be a clean well kid!". Below this is a table with three columns: "Parent's name", "Child's name", and "Phone number". The table has 10 rows for data entry. At the bottom, there is a note: "The kindergarten teacher will then forward this information to the Dental Program at Agincourt. A staff member from Agincourt will be in contact with you shortly to make a dental appointment for your child." and a box labeled "Insert agency logo here".

Parent's name	Child's name	Phone number



# Appendices

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Appendix 1 – Sample consent Form  
(including sample benefits and risks statements)

# Sample Consent Form

## CHILD DETAILS Form to be completed by Parent/Guardian

Child's First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male or Female (Circle)

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

School / Kindergarten: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Health Care / Pensioner Concession Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Health Care / Pensioner Concession Card Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Medicare Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Was your child born in Australia: Yes or No (Circle)

If No, what country were they born: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin: Yes or No (Circle)

Does your child need an interpreter: Yes or No (Circle)

If Yes, what language: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please complete attached Medical Questionnaire (Agency to supply usual Medical Questionnaire)

## CONSENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Full name),  
relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian),  
consent for my child \_\_\_\_\_ (Child's name)  
to participate in an oral health screen.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian signature

Date:     /     /



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## SAMPLE STATEMENTS OF BENEFITS AND RISKS

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What is included in a screening session may vary by dental agencies. It is the responsibility of individual community dental agencies to provide information to families about what will be done at the screening session. The following provides some benefit/risk sample statements to support agencies in developing information for families.

A comprehensive **examination** (check-up) assesses all teeth, their gums and jaws, and mouth.

**Benefit:**

Check-ups are an excellent way to find any problems early, make a plan for necessary treatment so that treatment can commence as soon as possible.

**Risk:**

No damage can be done with the mirror and probe used in the check-up.

**Risk of not providing this service:**

Without a check-up, problems will not be found and they could get worse if left untreated.

A limited **examination** (check-up), sometimes called a screening, is a quicker, less thorough check but it will give you an idea about your child's oral health.

**Benefit:**

Screening identifies any major problems, and provides for a treatment plan to be made.

**Risk:**

No damage can be done with the mirror and probe used in the check-up.

**Risk of not providing this service:**

Without a check-up, problems will not be found and they could get worse if left untreated.

Application of **fluoride**-containing solutions to the surfaces of the teeth.

**Benefit:**

Fluoride is widely used to prevent tooth decay. Fluoride is a common mineral that helps build strong teeth and bones. Fluoride treatments do not prevent decay from forming but can control the rate at which decay develops. If needed, we may apply fluoride varnish to your child's teeth with early signs of decay (white spot lesions), or moderate to high risk of developing decay, or active decay, or tooth sensitivity.

Treatment is painless, with the varnish applied to the teeth using a brush or cotton bud. This usually takes about 2 minutes and your child cannot eat, drink, or rinse for 30 minutes after the fluoride application.

**Risk:**

Swallowing too much fluoride can be dangerous, however the small amounts applied to teeth during our treatment will not reach toxic levels.

There is a risk of an allergic reaction to an ingredient in the material. Children with an allergy to rosin or colophony or sticking plaster, or who have been hospitalized with asthma or an allergy, should avoid the topical fluoride application.

**Risk of not providing this service:**

Tooth decay may get worse and require larger treatment if it continues.

**Oral hygiene instruction** gives advice on the right toothpaste and products to use, and how to effectively remove build-ups (plaque) on teeth to prevent decay.

**Benefit:**

Thorough toothbrushing with the correct technique is needed for healthy teeth and gums. It is important to start good oral hygiene in early years, so that habits are correctly learnt. Good oral hygiene at an early age will reduce the likelihood of decay and gum disease. We may discuss the actual method used, or the frequency of cleaning, or the types of toothpaste to use, or other products, e.g. dental floss, that are recommended for your child.

**Risk:**

With a change to the cleaning process, cleaning is more thorough on some parts of the gums around the teeth, which may cause some bleeding to start with, in areas that were previously inflamed.

**Risk of not providing this service:**

Ineffective brushing will not remove plaque and may lead to tooth decay or gum problems.

## Appendix 2 – Sample Examination Report and Referral Form

# SAMPLE EXAMINATION REPORT AND REFERRAL FORM

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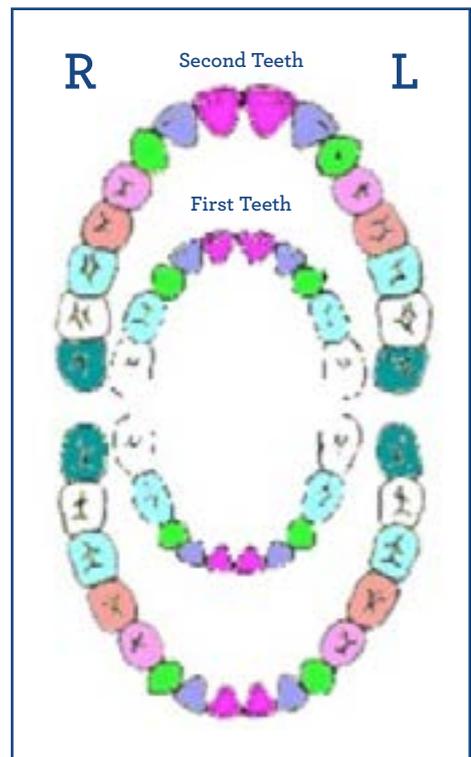
Your child, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), received a dental examination today:

- No treatment was necessary
- We recommend a further examination with x-rays and/or cleaning at our dental clinic
- Parental supervision of tooth brushing is required; children need an adult to help them brush their teeth until about 7 or 8 years of age
- Fluoride was applied to areas of your child's teeth
- Some first teeth are decayed, however because these teeth will soon fall out and be replaced by second teeth we suggest that they do not need to be filled.  
If your child develops a toothache, please contact us on \_\_\_\_\_.
- Your child did not want to be examined; please contact us on \_\_\_\_\_.

## THE FOLLOWING FURTHER TREATMENT IS SUGGESTED

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- X-rays
- Application of dental sealants to help prevent tooth decay
- Filling/s in baby teeth
- Filling/s in adult teeth
- Extraction of baby teeth
- Extraction of adult teeth
- Application of fluoride to help prevent tooth decay
- An orthodontic assessment by a dentist
- Other treatment is needed that we need to discuss with a parent



Please bring this form with you to your next dental appointment.

To make a booking, please contact our

Dental Clinic on \_\_\_\_\_.

*Sometimes the recommended treatment may change over time.*



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## Appendix 3 – I want to be a Clean well kid



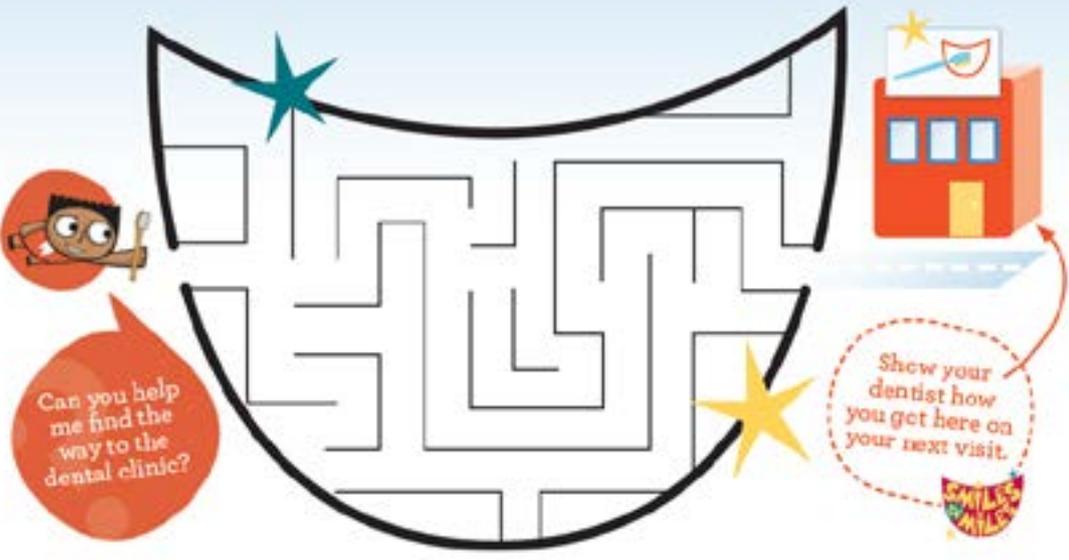
## Appendix 4 – Postcard

# BRUSHBOY SAYS



Take me with you on your next visit to the dental clinic!

 Smiles 4 Miles is an initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) which works in partnership with organisations to improve the oral health of children, their families, early childhood staff and the wider community.



Can you help me find the way to the dental clinic?

Show your dentist how you got here on your next visit.

All Victorian children 12 years and under are eligible to receive general dental care at local community dental services.

 To find your local public dental clinic and for more oral health information visit [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)

\* Fees may apply.

# Appendix 5 – Poster



Are you

a

SMILES  
4  
MILES

child

?

Please let reception know  
if your child is enrolled in a  
kindergarten participating  
in Smiles 4 Miles



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Smiles 4 Miles is an initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) which works in partnership with organisations to improve the oral health of children, their families, early childhood staff and the wider community.

[www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)

# Appendix 6 – List of early childhood services reception list

