

healthyfamilies healthysmiles

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Celebrating our teeth at Library Storytime

To help kids get a great start with their oral health, 20 enthusiastic pre-schoolers joined Children and Youth Services Librarian, Tasha Marsh for a very special storytime session at Kathleen Syme Library & Community Centre.

During Dental Health Week (6-12 August) the group sang songs about brushing, laughed at funny stories about teeth, and enjoyed creating healthy – and very colourful – mouths out of paper plates.

“We do storytimes on all sorts of themes,” explained Tasha. “It introduces concepts in a way that’s fun and normalises them. Teeth storytime makes perfect sense – it shows kids that looking after our teeth is a part of our daily routines and something that we can read and sing about.”

The songs, storybook ideas, and craft activities appear in a new **Storytime Kit** developed by DHSV, thanks to Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles funding from the Victorian Government. The collection aims to actively engage young children in fun, play-based learning around teeth and how to keep them healthy.

The Storytime Kit builds on **Baby teeth count too!** a DHSV program designed to help Supported Playgroup Facilitators share dental health information with parents and children. The Storytime Kit provides an opportunity to reach young children and families in a different setting.

Thanks to the Children and Youth Services Team at Kathleen Syme Library, who were key partners in the development of the new Kit, and for launching the kit during Dental Health Week. Kathleen Syme Library was one of six Melbourne City Council branches that led Dental Health Week Storytime, reaching more than 120 children and families.

A big thanks also to Pia Frisby, Library Programs Officer, Gannawarra Shire Council and Sue Barnard, Team Leader, Children’s & Youth Services, Maribyrnong Library Service for their inspiration and guidance with this project.



Tasha Marsh, Children and Youth Services Librarian



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Brush Book Bed — linking brushing to bedtime

While one of the most effective ways to prevent tooth decay is toothbrushing, we know getting children to brush can be challenging.

Next year we plan to try something different!

Thanks to funding from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) we will trial an innovative approach to supporting families and Supported Playgroups with toothbrushing. **Brush Book Bed** aims to strengthen parents' self-efficacy to establish a regular habit of parent-child toothbrushing.

This new program continues our work in the Supported Playgroup setting with **Baby teeth count too!** an initiative that promotes good dental health of children from birth to five years. Since 2015, we have conducted over 30 workshops with 200 Supported Playgroup Facilitators across Victoria.

Following ongoing feedback and a program review, **Baby teeth count too!** has been updated to build the skills of professionals to promote toothbrushing. A new



companion

Activity Kit offers Facilitators a suite of resources to engage and collaborate with families, such as play activities, storybook ideas, and songs.

The program supports the triangular partnership between child, family, and playgroup.

To help parents create a habit of brushing their young children's teeth, we are tying toothbrushing to the bedtime routine. **Brush Book Bed** encourages toothbrushing, reading together, and getting to bed at a regular time each night.

Facilitators show parents how to brush, as well as providing practical support, such as tricks and tips to make toothbrushing fun.

The Brush Book Bed pilot project will be offered in selected regions to professional Supported Playgroup Facilitators able to deliver a toothbrushing demonstration and take part in pre/post evaluation.

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Welcome Natalia

We are very pleased to welcome Natalia Okelo to the Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles team. Natalia comes to DHSV with diverse health promotion experience, both overseas and locally, having worked most recently with Queensland Health. ...Welcome to the team, Natalia!

Congratulations Allison Ridge who was promoted to the Manager Health Promotion Programs role. Allison will continue to support the Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles program in her new role.

Strengthening toothbrushing through MCH Services

58% of infants and toddlers don't have their teeth brushed twice a day

RCH Child Oral Health Poll, March 2018



Decay can occur as soon as teeth appear. Regular brushing of teeth and gums can prevent decay in children. However the importance of toothbrushing in younger children is not well understood by some parents. Recent research tells us:

- One in three parents think that babies don't need their teeth cleaned everyday
- More than half of infants and toddlers don't have their teeth brushed twice a day
- A quarter of parents of infants and toddlers have been shown how to brush their child's teeth

Baby teeth need cleaning too! initiative, aims to strengthen toothbrushing demonstrations through the MCH services. This initiative will provide tools to help MCH Nurses build confidence and skills of parents to establish positive brushing routines.

During November-December , MCH services will receive

- Mouth models to support

toothbrushing demonstrations

- Toothbrushes and toothpaste (tooth packs), and informative resources.

This provides an opportunity for MCH Nurses to **initiate conversations about teeth cleaning**, respond to misconceptions and encourage parents to initiate a tooth brushing routine early in their children's lives.

Thanks to funding from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), DHSV is partnering with the Department of Education and Training (DET) and Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to support the implementation of this initiative.

Baby Teeth Need Cleaning Too! was formally launched during the **State-wide Maternal and Child Health Conference** on 26 October 2018.



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