

Presentation Abstracts

Theme 4: Collaboration in paediatric allied health

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Abstract title: *Smiles all around for Ballarat Preschools*

The Smiles 4 Miles program aims to improve children's oral health by promoting a healthy environment using three key messages; Eat Well, Drink Well and Clean Well; and promoting local public dental clinics to families.

Ballarat Community Health (BCH), in partnership with the Ballarat Health Services Dental Clinic (BHS), are working with 16 preschools to promote oral health in response to statistics of admission rates for dental conditions in children aged 0-4 were almost three times higher in Ballarat (12.6%), when compared to the state average (4.9%).

Creating a supportive environment for oral health is achieved through policy development, health education, free consumables to support daily brushing, and onsite dental examinations.

In 2015, 377 children were examined at the onsite clinics; 44% of these children required further treatment. Continued dental care was provided through the clinic and all children were placed on a reminder schedule to advocate regular dental visits. From 2014-2015, the total number children aged 0-5 registered with BHS dental clinic increased by 135%. The use of preschools as a setting for oral health promotion and dental examinations is beneficial for promoting good oral health practices and early diagnosis and prevention of oral disease. Preschool dental visits can also create a positive experience for children and parents, which is imperative for long-term dental care. In addition, the relationship between BCH and BHS has mediated a collaborative approach to other health promotion initiatives including: Healthy Eating Active Lifestyle for adults and dental outreach clinic(s) for at-risk homeless youth clients.

References:

Dental Health Services Victoria. Early Childhood Services Toolkit: Smiles 4 Miles. Melbourne (AU): Dental Health Services Victoria; 2015. 150p.

Biography

Tameaka is a Health Promotion Officer at Ballarat Community Health. She holds a Bachelor of Health Sciences, Public Health Major, with Honours Degree, and has been employed at Ballarat Community Health since 2014. Her role consists of promoting and coordinating health and wellbeing programs in preschools, primary and secondary schools. These

programs include; the Healthy Together Achievement Program; MEND 2 – 4 a healthy lifestyle program for 2 – 4 year old children and their families; and Smiles 4 Miles – an oral health promotion program that promotes healthy eating, drinking water and good oral hygiene practice to children within the preschool setting.