Role modelling

The role of adults in Happy Teeth is one of direction, support and behaviour reinforcement through role modelling by early childhood staff and parents/carers. Facility staff and parents/carers are partners in sharing responsibility for children’s positive oral hygiene development. As partners, you can encourage children to assume some responsibility for their own oral hygiene for the first time.

A large body of research supports the importance of role models in children’s learning and recent findings have brought into focus the large amount of learning that takes place for a young child when with their parents/carers. Young children learn by simply being around their parents/carers and discussing what they are doing, or have done, what they intend doing next and by asking and answering questions.

As staff in the facility, you act as the link between the facility and the children's parents/carers. Happy Teeth encourages you to actively seek parents/carers involvement in their children’s hygiene development – specifically to brush their child’s teeth before arrival at the facility and again before bed.

Directors, group leaders, staff

Directors, group leaders and staff are key players in Happy Teeth. Helping parents/carers to become involved and making Happy Teeth part of regular activity through good nutrition, feeding practices and oral hygiene is the primary responsibility of the facility staff. Given young children learn by doing, learning opportunities that are multi-disciplined and/or cross developmental are best suited to children’s natural learning styles. Happy Teeth is designed for you to be able to expand on the concepts and resources. You can choose which parts of the kit you use and how you use them. It is hoped that the ideas for Happy Teeth can be applied across a number of different activities to suit your early childhood facility.

Dental professionals

Dental professionals can provide support and advice in several ways:

- in-service training for early childhood staff implementing a toothbrushing program
- support for carers incorporating oral health education into the curriculum
- oral health information.

Your local dental professional’s contact details:

Name:............................................................................................................................................................................................................................

Phone:..........................................................................................................................................................................................................................

Email:............................................................................................................................................................................................................................