

Successful Partnerships to Improve Oral Health in Head Start

Contact Information

Program title: New York University Head Start Outreach Project

Contact person: Jill Fernandez, R.D.H., M.P.H.

Contact title: Clinical Associate Professor

Organization: New York University College of Dentistry, Department of Pediatric Dentistry

Address: 345 East 24th Street

City: New York

State: NY

Zip: 10010

Telephone: (212) 998-9653

Fax: (212) 995- 4364

E-mail: jbf2@nyu.edu

Program Information

Type of Program

Early Head Start and Head Start

Location of Program

Center-based program option

Partnership Information

The purpose of the partnership was to develop a public-private partnership with New York City Head Start programs and New York University College of Dentistry (NYUCD). NYUCD provides a dental home, oral examinations, preventive services, oral health education, and access to treatment as per Head Start program performance standards.

Oral Health Activity

Education

Disease prevention

Service delivery

Activity Description

Purpose: To develop public-private partnerships with Head Start programs and the NYUCD. NYUCD provides a dental home, oral examinations, preventive services, oral health education, and access to treatment as per Head Start program performance standards.

Methods: In 1994, a formal agreement was made with the New York City Administration for Children's Services/Head Start designating NYUCD as the preferred provider for oral health care for children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start. A team consisting of a dental hygienist and a pediatric dental resident provides on-site diagnostic and preventive services such as examinations, fluoride varnish, and oral health education. Appropriate treatment referrals are made to either the dental college or a community provider. Oral health workshops are offered to parents and staff. For families without a dentist, NYUCD provides transportation to bring the children to the college for comprehensive care. Additionally, in 2007, a partnership agreement

was signed with the government of the U.S. Virgin Islands authorizing outreach programs twice a year to provide similar services.

Results: Since its inception, over 25,000 children have received examinations, preventive services, and education, with many receiving follow-up services at the NYUCD pediatric dentistry clinic. Additionally, pediatric dental residents have learned about the oral health protocols of Head Start and have gained valuable experience in working in underserved areas with high-risk populations.