



September 2021 | Issue No. 7

## Promoting Oral Health and School Readiness

Welcome to Resources to Make You Smile! This monthly newsletter features information and tools Head Start staff can use to help families promote good oral health. These tips will help Head Start staff support families, pregnant people, and children, including children with disabilities. The newsletter also includes a recipe for a healthy snack that children can make in a Head Start classroom or at home with their families.

### Oral Health and School Readiness



The health of a child's mouth can affect all aspects of their life. School readiness depends on positive physical, social and emotional, language, and cognitive development. Oral health impacts each of these areas and is a key aspect of a child's school readiness.

Children with poor oral health may:

- Have a hard time concentrating and learning because they are in pain
- Miss more school days
- Develop other serious health conditions, such as infections
- Stop smiling, cover their mouth with their hands when they speak, or withdraw from family, friends, and teachers if others comment on the appearance of their teeth

Explore the [Oral Health and School Readiness](#) tip sheet to learn more about the impact of oral health on a child's ability to learn. Discover tips for Head Start staff to encourage positive oral health practices among parents and in the classroom.

Strengthen staff's knowledge and understanding of the effects of poor oral health on school performance, social relationships, and school attendance with [Oral Health and Learning: When Children's Oral Health Suffers, So Does Their Ability to Learn](#).

## Resources for Parents

### [Be an Oral Health Champion](#)

Share this booklet with parents to help them learn about problems children with poor oral health might have. Find ideas for encouraging positive oral health practices at home.

## Cook's Corner Recipe: Apple Tuna Bites

### Ingredients

1 5 oz. can tuna, drained  
2 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons diced onion  
¼ cup chopped celery  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
1 apple, sliced, with core removed

### Directions

1. Place the tuna, mayonnaise, onion, celery, and lemon juice in a bowl and mix well.
2. Spoon some of the mixture on top of each apple slice.

### Makes 2 to 4 servings

**Safety tip:** To prevent injuries, an adult should slice ingredients.



## Stay Informed

Please share this issue of Resources to Make You Smile! with colleagues who may be interested. Find past issues of [Resources to Make You Smile!](#) on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC).

Did someone forward you this newsletter? Stay up to date by subscribing: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/subscribe>

Join [MyPeers](#) to connect with Head Start and early childhood colleagues around the country on this and other topics. The **Health, Safety, and Wellness** community has more than 1,500 members who are networking, sharing, and learning from each other. Find it under All Communities and select the blue “Join” button.

## We Want to Hear from You

Send your questions or comments to the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety at [health@ecetta.info](mailto:health@ecetta.info) or (toll-free) 888-227-5125.

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