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Follow Up on Needed Oral Health Care

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.

Follow Up on Needed Oral Health Care



Some parents believe that, because children's primary (baby) teeth fall out, treating tooth decay is not necessary. Primary teeth are vital to a child's ability to eat foods and speak clearly. Treating tooth decay in primary teeth can also prevent the need for braces by holding space open in the jaw for permanent teeth that are forming beneath them. If tooth decay is present in a child's mouth, it can

spread from one tooth to another, including to permanent teeth, which come into the mouth when a child is between ages 5 and 7. Therefore, it is critical to help parents understand the importance of treating tooth decay in primary teeth.

Explore the [Following Up on Needed Oral Health Care](#) tip sheet to learn more about why treating tooth decay in primary teeth is important. Discover tips Head Start staff can use to encourage parents to get follow-up care for their child.

Read the [Engaging Parents in Their Child's Oral Health](#) tip sheet to help parents learn how primary teeth contribute to their children's health and development.

Resources for Parents

Share these [Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#) handouts to encourage parents to learn more about the importance of primary teeth and why it's essential to take children to the dental clinic to receive treatment for tooth decay.

- [Getting Oral Health Treatment Is Important](#)
- [Understanding Why Baby Teeth Are Important](#)

Cook's Corner Recipe: Snowman Crackers

Ingredients

1 carrot
1 red or orange bell pepper
1 to 2 celery sticks (ribs)
1 package low-fat cream cheese, softened
1 box round whole wheat or rice crackers
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed

Directions

1. Cut the carrot into thin strips about ¼-inch long.
2. Cut the bell pepper into strips about ¼-inch long.
3. Cut the celery sticks into short thin strips.
4. Spread a thin layer of cream cheese onto three crackers.
5. Arrange three crackers on a plate to make a snowman.

6. Add the black beans for eyes, a mouth, and buttons.
Use a carrot strip for the nose, strips of bell pepper for the hat and scarf, and celery strips for the arms.



Makes 24 to 36 servings

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

Stay Informed

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

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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 or (toll-free) 888-227-5125.

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