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## National Children's Dental Health Month

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.

## National Children's Dental Health Month



Developing good oral health habits at an early age and visiting the dentist frequently give children a great start for a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. It's always important for parents to take care of their children and their own oral health to prevent oral disease, and that's especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic.

February is National Children's Dental Health Month and a great time to promote good oral health practices in Head Start programs and at home. Use the resources below to raise staff and parents' awareness of the importance of children's oral health. Learn about ideas for family

engagement and education activities that can be done in the classroom or virtually.

## Resources for Staff and Parents

Share these resources with Head Start staff and parents to learn about taking care of children's oral health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Coronavirus Disease and Oral Health Information for Parents

In the first handout, discover simple tips parents can follow to keep their child's mouth healthy. The second handout describes changes many dental offices have made to lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 to patients and their parents.

- [Promoting Good Oral Health at Home](#)
  - [Chinese](#)
  - [Spanish](#)
  - [Tagalog](#)
  - [Vietnamese](#)
- [Visiting the Dental Office](#)
  - [Chinese](#)
  - [Spanish](#)
  - [Tagalog](#)
  - [Vietnamese](#)

### [Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#)

This series of handouts provides simple oral health tips for young children, pregnant people, and families. Explore information around toothbrushing, fluoride, preventing and responding to oral injuries, and more.

### [Toothbrushing in Head Start Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Review strategies and best practices programs can implement to safely resume toothbrushing in the Head Start classroom.

### [Questions to Ask When Looking for a Dental Office](#)

It's vital to find a dental office that works for both parent and child. This tip sheet provides sample questions to ask dental office staff before making an appointment.

## Ideas for Family Education and Engagement

- Use [Choose and Use: Head Start Oral Health Curricula](#) to identify lessons and enrichment activities

for staff to teach parents and children healthy oral hygiene habits to prevent oral disease.

- Use family engagement activities from [Cavity Free Kids](#) or individual lesson plans from [Oral Health for Maryland's Kids: A Head Start Teacher's Guide for Creating Healthy Smiles](#) to teach parents and children about good oral health practices.
- Host a virtual or in-person cooking show for parents and children featuring recipes from [Cook's Corner: Recipes for Healthy Snacks](#).
- Invite a dentist or dental hygienist to talk to parents and answer their questions.

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## Cook's Corner Recipe: Snowman Crackers

### Ingredients

5 to 6 strawberries, sliced  
4 ounces low-fat cream cheese  
1 slice whole wheat bread

### Directions

1. Put the cream cheese and strawberries in a bowl. Mash them with a fork until the mixture is smooth and pink.
2. Use a 2-inch heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut two hearts from the slice of bread.
3. Use a small heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut a small heart from one of the heart-shaped pieces of bread.
4. Spread the cream cheese mixture on the larger heart and top with the smaller heart so the cream cheese mixture shows through.



**Makes 1 serving**

**Safety tip:** To prevent injuries, an adult should slice the ingredients and supervise use of cookie cutters.

## 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).

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 currently 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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