



National Center on
Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety

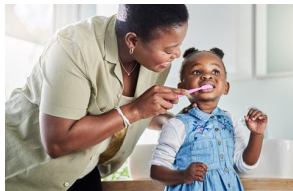


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Involving Parents in Their Child's Oral Health

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 help Head Start staff support families, pregnant people, and children. 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.

Involving Parents in Children's Oral Health



Parent involvement in oral health is key to their child's overall health and well-being. Parents who introduce, reinforce, and model good oral health behaviors and attitudes pass them on to their children. Parents can do this by brushing their child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste every morning and before bedtime and by giving their child healthy foods that are good for the teeth. Also, when parents take their child for dental visits regularly, the child is more likely to seek oral health care as an adult. This all helps the child build good oral hygiene and eating habits that will last a lifetime.

Head Start staff can help families engage in their child's oral health by:

- Asking parents about their experience taking the child for a dental visit
- Asking parents to show how they brush their child's teeth
- Suggesting that parents make simple, healthy snacks for their child using [Cook's Corner: Recipes for Healthy Snacks](#)
- Encouraging parents to model good oral health habits at home, like brushing their own teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day and eating healthy foods

Resources for Staff

Read these [Brush Up on Oral Health](#) tip sheets to learn more about how to help parents engage in their child's oral health, including children with disabilities who may need health services and support services.

- [Engaging Parents in Their Child's Oral Health](#)
- [Promoting Oral Health for Children with Disabilities](#)

Resources for Parents

Share the following handouts from the [Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#) series with parents to help them learn why it's important to take care of baby teeth and take a child for follow-up treatment if the dentist recommends it.

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

Cook's Corner Recipe: Mini Bagel Wreaths

Ingredients

- 1 mini bagel
- 2 ounces low-fat cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon chopped red, green, and yellow bell peppers



Directions

1. Cut the bagel in half.
2. Spread 1 ounce of the cream cheese on each bagel half.
3. Sprinkle with the chopped bell peppers

Makes 2 servings

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

Stay Connected!

Join [MyPeers](#) to connect with Head Start and early childhood colleagues around the country on this and other topics. Members of the **Health, Safety, and Wellness** community are currently networking, sharing, and learning from each other. Find it under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

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? [Subscribe](#) to stay up to date!

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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