



National Center on  
Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety

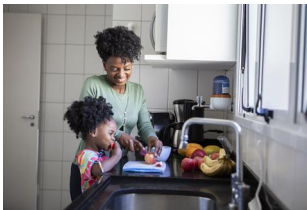


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## Health Literacy Improves Oral Health

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, expectant families, 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.

### Oral Health Literacy



Health literacy is more than a person's ability to read. It is the degree to which they can get, evaluate, understand, and use oral health information to make informed decisions about their oral health. People with high health literacy tend to have fewer oral health problems than those with low health literacy.

Head Start staff can help improve families' oral health literacy by sharing information that is correct, up to date, and written in simple language. When they have good information, families often incorporate healthy oral health practices into their daily lives and visit the dental office regularly.

### Resources for Staff

Read these [Brush Up on Oral Health](#) tip sheets for strategies to improve oral health literacy. Get tips on incorporating culturally responsive oral health practices in the classroom and in discussions with parents.

- [Improving Oral Health Literacy](#)
- [Using Culturally Responsive Practices to Promote Oral Health](#)

Watch [An Introduction to Health Literacy](#) and [Improving Health Literacy for Families](#) to learn more about the health communication process. These webinars discuss how to incorporate health-literate practices into Head Start programs' service delivery, and how to use [Sesame Workshop](#) resources to support families.

Review [Health Literacy Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Programs](#) to learn about seven core factors to help Head Start programs become health-literate organizations.

## Resources for Parents

Share [Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#) handouts with parents to suggest ideas for how they can promote good oral health at home. The easy-to-read handouts are available on a wide variety of oral health topics.

Incorporate the resources on Sesame Workshop's [Teeth webpage](#) into classroom and parent educational activities. Designed to improve oral health literacy with simple messages, the webpage features videos, interactive games, songs, classroom activities, and parent tip sheets.

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## Cook's Corner Recipe: Pretzel Toothbrushes

### Ingredients

- 1 small cucumber and/or banana
- 2–3 teaspoons low-fat cream cheese and/or peanut butter
- 4 pretzel rods, broken or cut in half

### Directions

1. Slice the cucumber and/or banana lengthwise in quarters.
2. Cut each cucumber and/or banana slice into small triangles.
3. Spread a small amount of cream cheese and/or peanut butter on  $\frac{1}{2}$  of one end of the pretzel rod.
4. Press the wide end of the cucumber and/or banana triangles into the cream cheese or peanut butter to form the bristles of the toothbrush.

### Makes 8 servings

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



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## 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.

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](mailto:health@ecetta.info) or (toll-free) 888-227-5125.

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