

Eat Together Play Together Strong Smiles Evaluation Report



NORTH COAST AREA HEALTH SERVICE

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April 2009

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to the people who have contributed to this evaluation process

- Laurel Rogers, North Coast Health Promotion
- Donna Lloyd, North Coast Health Promotion
- Teena Binge, North Coast Area Health Service
- Kimberlii Austin, Aboriginal Early Childhood consultant
- Goonellabah Transition Program staff
- Avigdor Zask, North Coast Health Promotion
- Lyndy McPhee, North Coast Health Promotion
- Uta Dietrich, North Coast Health Promotion
- Eric van Beurden, North Coast Health Promotion

Abbreviations

- ETPTSS Eat Together Play Together Strong Smiles
- GTP Goonellabah Transition Program
- FaHCSIA Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and
Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
- ☺ Enjoyed/engaged a lot
- 😊 Enjoyed/engaged a bit
- ☹ Did not enjoy/engage

Everyday foods are nutritious, e.g. fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, bread, cereal, rice and pasta, dairy products, fish, meat, eggs, nuts and seeds.

Sometimes foods and drinks are mostly processed foods with added fat and/or salt and/or sugar e.g. chips, lollies, biscuits, chocolate, fried foods, soft drinks, fruit juice drinks and cordials. Children can learn that sometimes foods are not to be consumed daily.

Note: Throughout this document, the words Aboriginal children or Aboriginal people refers to people of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.¹

Executive Summary

The Eat Together Play Together Strong Smiles (ETPTSS) program is a nutrition and oral health promotion program predominantly targeting Aboriginal children aged 3-5 years old in the early childhood/preschool setting.

The program uses age appropriate resources such as readers, songs, games and dramatic play to raise awareness of the five key NSW messages for a healthy mouth:²

- Eat Well
- Drink Well
- Clean Well
- Play Well
- Stay Well

In Term 4 2007, the program was piloted with 22 children of the Goonellabah Transition Program (GTP). During the pilot phase, a process evaluation, during which the program's resources and activities were evaluated, was conducted. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to assess resource effectiveness in relation to:

- How the facilitators used the resources and conducted the activities.
- How the children responded and interacted with the resources and activities

Face to face interviews, classroom observations and post video observations were used to review resource effectiveness.

Results showed that GTP staff and ETPTSS facilitators thought that the program and its activities were well received by the children, that appropriate language was used, and that the program worked well in delivering key nutrition and oral health messages. The findings provide insights into best practice in resource design and project implementation for Aboriginal preschool children.

Recommendations for Design and Implementation

- A comprehensive evaluation to be conducted to assess long term impacts and outcomes of the program.
- Preferred model is to train early childhood/preschool teachers as program facilitators with Aboriginal health workers in a support role.
- The ETPTSS team to provide facilitator training to early childhood/preschool teachers.
- ETPTSS team to provide training to Aboriginal health workers.
- A parent/carer component to be included in the implementation phase.

- The program's manual should include templates of teaching aids and lesson plans for activities. This will ensure that consistency occurs within the program no matter who is facilitating.
- Activities and games should be more structured. More detailed game rules will be included in the manual.
- Dental therapists involved in the program should undertake cultural awareness training.
- A follow up visit to be conducted three months after program completion to review knowledge retention.
- If resource effectiveness is being measured and a video recorder is used, an independent person should be brought in to record sessions.
- Adopt the "Eat Together Play Together but don't share your tooth brush around" as the theme song to sing each week. To help the children learn all of the ETPTSS songs a CD is provided to the centre/preschool.
- Vegetables to be served either warm or in a mixed meal that is prepared ahead of time e.g. zucchini slice, pumpkin soup.

What is the Eat Together, Play Together Strong Smiles Oral Health Program?

The Eat Together Play Together Strong Smiles (ETPTSSP) program is an oral health promotion program aimed at children 3-5 yrs old in the early childhood and preschool setting. While the program predominantly targets Aboriginal children in the early childhood setting, it is also suitable for non Aboriginal children. The program uses resources such as readers, songs, games and dramatic play to raise awareness of the five NSW key health messages for a healthy mouth ²:

- Eat Well
- Drink Well
- Clean Well
- Play Well and
- Stay Well

The program aims to:

- Promote positive oral hygiene practices.
- Encourage the consumption of fruit and vegetables and discourage regular consumption of energy dense foods.
- Encourage the consumption of water and decrease the consumption of sugar – sweetened drinks.
- Develop culturally appropriate, locally relevant effective resources which promote positive health practices.
- Sustain good health practices through policy implementation and incorporating the curriculum's key priority areas into intervention and resource design.

At the end of the program children should be able to:

- Distinguish between everyday foods and sometimes foods³
- Identify that water is the best drink
- Know how to brush their teeth and gums and rinse their mouths correctly
- Understand what happens in visits to dental clinics (process)
- Eat a variety of fruit and vegetables due to the regular weekly tastings
- Understand what is happening when they have sore teeth and gums
- Understand the importance of not sharing toothbrushes

Session format and content

The program consists of five one-hour sessions, at weekly intervals plus an additional session to accommodate the dental therapist's visit. Sessions are conducted in the morning and linked to the morning break.

Each weekly session targets a different theme:

- *Session 1* Sometimes Foods/Everyday Foods
- *Session 2* Strong smiles
- *Session 3* Water
- *Session 4* Getting teeth checked & correct tooth brushing techniques
- *Session 5* Correct tooth brushing techniques

Each session consists of:

- A group story (story books)
- Tongue, mouth, words exercises
- Song (15 minutes)
- Small group games based activities (30 minutes)
- Fruit and vegetable taste testing in the morning break with an oral review of what was covered that day. (15 minutes)

Program Resources

The program resources include fun and visual readers, activities, and games that are all linked through a common theme which reinforces the key health message for that session. A variety of props are also used to encourage interaction including: Toothy Teddy, Tilda the Mouse, a dentist's patient puppet, plastic food, a shopping trolley, teeth mould and big toothbrush. The puppets in particular help us to work through any fears that the children may have regarding dental visits.

An early childhood consultant provided educational expertise in resource and program development. Resources were chosen/developed to excite, engage and encourage classroom interaction so as to make learning fun.

Resources are based on key literacy and numeracy learning outcomes. This increases their usability across other classroom activities.

All resources have been developed around the theme of Toothy Teddy and Tilda the Mouse. This gives the children something to connect with throughout the five weeks of the program. These aged based resources also provide a tangible medium for communicating and reinforcing key health messages.

Story books

Toothy Teddy and Tilda Go Shopping



The story follows Toothy Teddy and Tilda the Mouse as they go shopping for healthy food. As you move through the book different food items are put into the trolley and they are ticked off the shopping list. The book is child centred with ample opportunity to discuss what Teddy is buying and for the children to help find the healthy food items on the list.

Natural Habits



Natural Habits was developed as part of the SOKS program funded by NSW Health. The story centres on a girl named Kate and her friends' possum, kangaroo, wombat and koala. It discusses the different ways each of them cleans their teeth. It provides an introduction into correct teeth cleaning procedures.

What's in your lunchbox Toothy Teddy?



Toothy Teddy's lunchbox holds a special surprise for Tilda the Mouse, a birthday invitation to Toothy Teddy's birthday party. The story follows a week of lunchbox contents where the children are asked what is in Toothy Teddy's lunchbox. On Friday the children get to pack the lunchbox with food cut outs. Saturday is Toothy Teddy's birthday and the children are asked what birthday foods they want to have. At the end they are reminded that Teddy needs to brush his teeth before going to bed. The book introduces the concept of sometimes foods and everyday foods.

Handa's Surprise



Handa's Surprise is a book about a girl named Handa who puts seven different delicious fruits in a basket to take to her friend Akeyo as a surprise. Handa's walk takes her past a variety of animals who eat the fruit along the way. The book encourages discussion about different kinds of fruit.

Smile! Getting your teeth checked at school



A locally produced book that graphically depicts the journey of a child through the local dental clinic. It identifies the process involved for a child and his/her carers when having a dental check.

Flip charts

The flip charts were used to provide reinforcing messages and pictures on:

- Sometimes/ everyday foods
- Where food comes from
- Why we need to eat food
- Why we need teeth
- Correct tooth brushing techniques
- How holes develop in teeth
- What foods help keep teeth and gums healthy

Strong tongue, strong mouth exercises

Strong tongue, strong mouth exercises help strengthen a child's mouth and tongue and assist them in working their tongues to form their words.

Examples of exercises used in the program:

1st Movement	2nd Movement	3rd Movement	4th Movement	5th Movement
Stick your tongue out as far as it will go	Try and touch your nose with your tongue by pretending that there is jelly or ice cream on your nose and you are trying to lick it off.	Put your tongue down onto your chin, again imagining that you have jelly etc on your chin.	Move your tongue to either side of your face (it's up to you which way you go first, left or right) and again using the jelly. Repeat the exercise again	Put your tongue behind your teeth on the upper part pushing your tongue out to form a curve and then on the bottom at the back of the teeth again to form a curve
				

Songs

There are 3 action songs that are included across the program and which target 3 key oral health messages:

'Eat together, play together but don't share your toothbrush around'

(Eat together Play together song).

WORDS ⇨	ACTIONS
Eat Together/ Play Together song	
Eat together ⇨	Pretend to eat
Play together ⇨	Palms facing forward make circular motions
But don't share your toothbrush around ⇨	Shake your pointing finger
You can eat together ⇨	Pretend to eat
Play together ⇨	Palms facing forward make circular motions
But don't share your toothbrush around ⇨	Shake your pointing finger
Cause there are germs that can be found ⇨	Keep shaking your pointing finger
If you share your toothbrush around ⇨	Shake fist
So you can eat together ⇨	Pretend to eat
Play together ⇨	Palms facing forward make circular motions
But don't share your toothbrush around ⇨	Shake your pointing finger

'Look after your gums as well as your teeth' (Gum song)

WORDS ⇨	ACTIONS
The Gum Song	
Don't forget your gums when brushing your teeth ⇨	Pretending to brush your teeth in the air in a circular motion
Cause gums needs working too ⇨	motion
But...don't do it hard, just do it well ⇨	Keep pretending to brush
Cause gums need working too ⇨	Pretend to brush in circles
Round and round we go, and that's when we know ⇨	
That our gums are healthy too ⇨	Then brush round and round on both sides
But...don't do it hard, just do it well ⇨	Keep brushing
Cause gums need working too ⇨	Pretend to brush in circles
Don't forget your gums when brushing your teeth ⇨	Pretending to brush your teeth in the air in a circular motion. Keep pretending to brush
Cause gums need working too ⇨	
But...don't do it hard, just do it well ⇨	
Cause gums need working too ⇨	

‘Water is so good for you’ (Water song)

WORDS ⇨	ACTIONS
<p>Water Song (sung similar to Polly put the kettle on)</p> <p>Water is so good for me So good for me, so good for me. Water is so good for me Let me count the ways</p> <p>ONE ⇨ It helps me when I brush my teeth ⇨ So good for me so good for me It helps me when I brush my teeth ⇨ Water’s good for me.</p> <p>TWO ⇨ It helps me when I rinse my mouth ⇨ So good for me so good for me It helps me when I rinse my mouth ⇨ Water’s good for me.</p> <p>THREE ⇨ When I’m hot I drink it down ⇨ So good for me so good for me When I’m hot I drink it down ⇨ Water’s good for me.</p> <p>FOUR ⇨ It helps me keep my body clean ⇨ So good for me so good for me It helps me keep my body clean ⇨ Water’s good for me.</p> <p>FIVE ⇨ Water helps me think and grow ⇨ So good for me so good for me ⇨ Water helps me think and grow ⇨ Water’s good for me. ⇨</p> <p>(Speak this line to children) “Do you know of other ways that water helps us?”</p>	<p>Hold one finger up Pretend to brush your teeth Pretend to brush your teeth</p> <p>Hold two fingers up Pretend to rinse out mouth & spit in sink Pretend to rinse out mouth & spit in sink</p> <p>Hold three fingers up Pretend to drink a cup of water Pretend to drink a cup of water</p> <p>Hold four fingers up Pretend to wash arms and legs Pretend to wash arms and legs</p> <p>Hold five fingers up Point finger to brain and then put hand up in air showing growth Point finger to brain and then put hand up in air showing growth</p>

Small group based activities

There were four games developed for the program they are:

“I went shopping and I bought....”



“I went shopping and I got...” The shopping trolley game helps children identify sometimes foods and everyday foods. Children go shopping and select from a variety of foods out of a cloth bag. They place the food in the seat or body of the trolley depending on whether it is a sometimes or everyday food. They then purchase the goods at the checkout using play money.

Brushing teeth



A role play activity using shaving cream for toothpaste, the tooth puppet and a large toothbrush. The children are shown correct teeth brushing techniques using the aids. They are then given the opportunity to practice the procedure.

Packing Toothy Teddy's lunchbox



Toothy Teddy is going to school and needs help in packing a healthy lunch. The children are asked to select foods for Toothy Teddy's lunchbox. There is discussion regarding the children's choices and amount of food selected for his lunch. Food is labelled according to sometimes foods and everyday foods. The activity ends with Toothy Teddy's birthday where children are asked to select birthday foods. The children then discuss the implications of eating too many sometimes foods and are reminded that they need to clean their teeth after eating both everyday and sometimes foods.

Dental dramatic play



The children get the opportunity to dress up as dentists using the puppet as a patient. The children show the puppet patient correct teeth brushing techniques and give advice on how to keep their teeth and gums healthy e.g. drink lots of water and don't have too many sometimes foods. The children have clipboards with a dental chart attached and they mark any problem teeth.

Fruit and vegetable taste testing (Attachment 1)

At the end of each visit the fruit and vegetable tasting is conducted, timed to coincide with morning tea.



The aim of this session is to introduce children to fruit and vegetables in season and to varieties that the children may not taste on a regular basis.

Dental staff visits

Dental staff visits provide an access and referral point for dental therapists.



Dental therapists participate in Session 6 and are involved in: teaching and reinforcing correct tooth brushing techniques explaining what happens at visits to local dental clinics and; conducting a quick lift the lip assessment.

Certificates and home dental resources

Certificates and resources are used to consolidate learnings of the five-week course and provide ongoing reminders and reinforcement of good practices.



At the end of the 5 weeks, children are provided with a participation certificate as well as a family pack which consists of toothbrush and toothpaste for the children, plus toothbrushes for any siblings they may have.

Session resources and activities

WEEK	1 ST ACTIVITY – STORY TELLING	2 ND ACTIVITY – SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES	3 RD ACTIVITY – FOOD TASTING
1	Sometime foods and everyday foods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Toothy Teddy and Tilda go shopping.</i> (Big Book Story) <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Mouth, Strong Tongues, Strong Words exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Eat Together/Play Together but don't share your toothbrush around song 	Shopping Trolley/Pillowcase Game- every day foods & sometimes food <i>'I went shopping and I got...'</i>	Fruit & Vegetable tasting & discussion
2	Strong Smiles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Natural Habits</i> big book <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Mouth, Strong Tongues, Strong Words exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Eat Together/Play Together but don't share your toothbrush around song <input type="checkbox"/> Look after your gums song 	Teeth brushing techniques using:-big teeth - big toothbrush and - shaving cream	Fruit & Vegetable tasting & discussion
3	Session THREE – Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>What's in Your Lunchbox Toothy Teddy</i> – Big Book <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strong Smiles</i> Flip Chart <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Mouth, Strong Tongues, Strong Words exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Eat Together/Play Together but don't share your toothbrush around song <input type="checkbox"/> Look after your gums song <input type="checkbox"/> Water is so good for you 	Packing Teddy's lunchbox and Getting ready for Teddy's birthday party.	Fruit & Vegetable tasting & discussion
4	Session FOUR - Getting Teeth Checked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Handa's Surprise</i> book. <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Mouth, Strong Tongues, Strong Words exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush and teeth modelling <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Smile Getting Your Teeth Checked at School</i> – Big Book <input type="checkbox"/> Eat Together/Play Together but don't share your toothbrush around song <input type="checkbox"/> Look after your gums song <input type="checkbox"/> Water is so good for you 	Role Playing Kit – Visiting the Dentist dramatic play (use dolls or other toys to pretend they are the patient) and the book Smile! Getting our teeth checked at School!	Fruit & Vegetable tasting & discussion
5	Session FIVE - Brushing Teeth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet Session <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Mouth, Strong Tongues, Strong Words exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Eat Together/Play Together but don't share your toothbrush around song <input type="checkbox"/> Look after your gums song <input type="checkbox"/> Water is so good for you 	Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes /Everyday Foods Revision using the cloth bag of plastic food <input type="checkbox"/> Getting teeth Checked <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy drinks <input type="checkbox"/> Correct tooth brushing techniques <input type="checkbox"/> Handing out individual toothbrush kids and certificates 	Fruit & Vegetable tasting & discussions

Resource Evaluation

Methods

The aim of the evaluation was to review the resources and activities used in program implementation. The effectiveness of resources was determined using qualitative research methods.

Methods included:

- Classroom observations
 - To observe the children's reaction to the activities and resources.
- Face to face interviews with classroom & program staff
 - To gain insight into the teachers and staff perceptions and views on the program and resources.
- Video recordings of program sessions
 - Each session was videoed as a backup support to classroom observations and to assist the facilitator to review session content.

The program was piloted and the resource evaluation conducted with students and staff of the Goonellabah Transition Program (GTP), a FaHCSIA funded transition to school early intervention program for children aged 3-5 years old situated in Goonellabah Public School. The pilot and evaluation process was conducted in the first six weeks of Term 4, 2007.

There were three project staff involved with the piloting of the ETPTSS program and resource evaluation;

- Project facilitator - responsible for presenting the program.
- Facilitator assistant - responsible for supporting the facilitator and bringing the props to life.
- Resource evaluator/observer – responsible for taking notes on how the children were responding to resources and participating in the activities. The resource evaluator was also responsible for videoing the program each week.

What happened each session?

The resource evaluator attended each session, made observations and recorded observational notes on:-

- How the facilitators used the resources and conducted the activities.
- How the children responded and interacted with the resources and activities

Classroom observations

To help the resource evaluator identify the children participating in the program, a visual roll was used.

The visual roll provided a list of the children's names with a picture of each child beside their name and their allocated id number. The roll could also be used to mark off attendance rates. Notes could also be made on the roll to identify group dynamics and this information was utilised to structure future groupings for activities.

**Eat Together
Play Together
Visual Roll**

Preschool:
Contact:

- Present - Completed

2007

Monday / Tuesday Group

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

Child pic here.

For each activity, the children's participation/attention to activity and enjoyment levels were recorded using an observation sheet and each child ID was filled in using the visual roll. Observations were also recorded when children demonstrated current knowledge and understandings during the activity (although this column was only used in one session as it was difficult to properly judge this).

To rate each session the resource evaluator circled the appropriate face on the observation sheet which also included space for any comments. (Attachment 2).

Attention

- ☺ Sitting down quietly facing the facilitator and maintaining focus on facilitator and/or participating fully in what is happening in the session.
- ☹ Focus is on the facilitator sometimes, but not always watching what is happening. At times fidgeting or talking to nearby children
- ☹ Focus is not on the facilitator, behaviour is disruptive

Enjoyment

- ☺ Children are smiling, engaged and generally looking happy in the session
- ☹ Children are somewhat engaged but are not looking as happy
- ☹ Children look like they would rather be somewhere else

Fruit and Vegetable Tastings

- ☺ Children have stated they liked that particular fruit or vegetable after tasting it
- ☹ Children said they sort of liked that particular fruit or vegetable after tasting it
- ☹ Children have stated they didn't like that particular fruit or vegetable after tasting it

Example of recording sheet

Teddy and Tilda Go Shopping - Big Book Story

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		
	☹	☺	😊	☹	☺	😊	☹	☺	😊
	☹	☺	😊	☹	☺	😊	☹	☺	😊

Comment:

.....

GTP staff and program facilitator interviews

Semi structured face to face interviews were conducted with:-

- GTP staff members
- ETPTSS project staff

The interviews were conducted by the resource evaluator once program implementation had ended. Interviews were conducted at the GTP or an agreed alternative place. Interviews ranged from 20-60 minutes and were conducted from February to May 2008.

The interview questions were structured into two parts with a total of 28 questions (Attachment 3):

- Part one looked at general feedback details about the different activities. Both the GTP staff and ETPTSS project staff were asked these questions.
- Part two asked more specific questions regarding the facilitator’s and program sustainability within the classroom setting and only the GTP staff answered these questions.

The evaluator used a digital recorder to record the interviews, which were then transcribed and coded into themes.

Results

This section summarises information collected from GTP staff, ETPTSS facilitators, the resource evaluator and participating children through classroom observations, written notes and face to face interviews. (Attachment 3)

Two classes were involved in the pilot program with a total of 22 children participating. Two classroom teachers, one Aboriginal education officer and the administration officer of GTP participated in the evaluation of the resources.

Profile of Participants

Out of the 22 children who were involved with the program:

- 18 were males
- 4 were female

- 11 were Aboriginal
- 11 were non-Aboriginal
- One was Sudanese

Feedback on the overall program

Overall GTP staff (4) and ETPTSS facilitators (3) thought that the program and its activities:

- Were well received by the children
- Used appropriate language and
- Worked well in delivering key oral health messages

Specific comments included:

- “I just think you totally had the kids engaged right from the start”
- “It went well because it was done in a child friendly way”
- “Yes it did work well because it used stories, games and props. It really got the kids involved and enjoying what we were doing.”
- “Yep very appropriate, it was easy for them to understand. The way it was set out, like song based stuff and book based stuff it was really easy for the kids to understand what was going on and they were very interactive”

GTP staff commented that:

- The children regularly mentioned the concept of sometimes food and everyday foods on days that the program was not operating
- The children talked about the tooth brushing message on days that the program was not operating
- There had not been any change to lunchbox food brought from home, however children appeared to be more amenable to trying different foods
- That it was important to constantly reinforce key health messages included in the program
- They were not all in agreement as to whether children were drinking or asking to drink more water

Specific comments included:

- “I think we found an increase in water to be honest.... I have to say that... Definite increase in water and even with the staff I have to say I think we found an increase in water maybe... and me I have to say I think we found an increase in water because I didn't normally drink... well I know I drank more water after the program.”
- “Even one day when I was at the circus after work with some children and there was one child there that came from GTP and he showed me that he'd brought water with him....he was so proud and I was so proud too.”
- “Mmm sorry I'd like to say yes but no, not really, no change in water consumption.”
- “I think it was important to keep reinforcing it with the kids and they seemed to retain, as the time went on they seemed to retain more and more information. So that then they could be giving info without even prompting, they'd be yeah, they'd be yelling out the answers before she even.”
- “I think you are really on the right path with sometimes and all the times foods because it's always been good and bad or it's always been you know, you can have this but you can't have that and I think that's really unreasonable.”

Feedback on resources:

The following provides detailed feedback on the individual resources.

1. Story books

From the observer notes it appeared that the children enjoyed all of the books. This was based on their level of attentiveness and enjoyment. In the observations, only smiley faces were marked for every child for both enjoyment and attention.

Toothy Teddy and Tilda Go Shopping Book (17 children participated)							
Attention	😊 = 17	😐 = 0	😞 = 0	Enjoyment	😊 = 17	😐 = 0	😞 = 0
OBSERVER							
<p>“The Teddy and Tilda story kept the kids entranced. Going through it the second time and using Teddy, Tilda the Mouse and the food really reinforced the message and got the kids involved and excited. They followed the story well and anticipated what Laurel would ask next...</p>							
STAFF RESPONSES							
<p>“You had the real trolleys and the props. All those visuals and things were really good. And I think the kids liked having the book. That was good, but it was also good having some props to go with that as well, they liked that”</p> <p>“They loved Teddy and Tilda but I think they loved Teddy and Tilda because we used a teddy and a little mouse for Tilda, and they, again as we were going through the story, talking about what they were collecting I made sure that I talked to the kids and interacted with them and got them to answer the questions. So they knew when we were going for tomatoes and when we were going for milk. They made sure that we always included them in it.”</p>							
Natural Habits Big Book (4 children participated – Resource Evaluator could only attend one day this week so observations were not done for the second day)							
Attention	😊 = 4	😐 = 0	😞 = 0	Enjoyment	😊 = 4	😐 = 0	😞 = 0
OBSERVER							
<p>“The book was very much enjoyed by the kids and by giving the children an animal each then reading through it again with the children acting out their animal I think it reinforced the message.”</p>							
STAFF RESPONSES							
<p>“Yeah that was a good one wasn’t it, that was quite good actually, yeah I liked that one. I thought it was a good resource”.</p> <p>“The way that we set it up was to... read the book but also have that interaction with the actual habits. There is possum and a koala and other animals and so after we read the story we got the kids to say which animal were they and how did they brush their teeth and that, and again that interaction of reading the story and then going through the story again... getting the kids to pretend that they were the animals. So I think they took to it pretty well.”</p>							
What’s in your Lunchbox Toothy Teddy (18 children participated)							
Attention	😊 = 18	😐 = 0	😞 = 0	Enjoyment	😊 = 18	😐 = 0	😞 = 0
OBSERVER							
<p>“Another really good book that was well received, it works better if Teena sits on the floor, kids forget Ted isn’t real and talk to Ted not Teena”</p>							

Comment from facilitator:	
“Toothy Teddy big book, they really loved all those books, yeah they really, really, I was so lucky that they did like them very much.”	
STAFF RESPONSES	
“Yeah, no that was good, that was fun. Again, I think because they were real photos of a real ted that they really got into that.”	
“Yeah and that’s the good thing though, they actually liked the book and then just to do the play acting they loved that so even if we didn’t do the play acting it would have been good but to have that Teddy play at the end is just brilliant you can’t do better than that so…”	
Getting Teeth Checked at School Big Book (12 children participated)	
Attention 😊 = 11 😐 = 1 ☹ = 0	Enjoyment 😊 = 11 😐 = 1 ☹ = 0
STAFF RESPONSES	
“Yeah that was great. I thought that was really good and that followed up by the dentist coming in was a really good idea too.”	
“Yep it’s really good for the kids to have that preparation because at four years old you need to have stuff told to you before it actually happens otherwise it can be too overwhelming sometimes. So to have it read out and know all the procedure, what’s going to happen when she comes? They are sitting there, already knowing what’s going to happen, rather than sitting there, you know, they’re constantly asking questions or something, or saying, like interrupting everything because they don’t know what’s going on and so their heads are all over the place. But with this here, they just sat there because they knew what was going to go on.”	
Handa’s Surprise Book	
(No data on how many Children participated or how they responded to the book)	
OBSERVER	
Handa’s Surprise was not formally surveyed. However, conversations with staff since indicated that the book was well liked and thought to be a good choice for the program.	

2. Flip Charts

From observation this resource appeared to work well, the children appeared to be attentive for most of time and enjoyed the session. Some of the bush tucker pictures brought up extra questions with children stating that they didn’t eat lizards, turtles etc, which was great for discussion.

The facilitator had to keep changing from one flip chart to the other. Not every section of each of the flip charts were used so the facilitator wasted time flipping through to find the right pages which gave the children enough time to get distracted.

Flip Charts (12 children participated)			
Attention	😊 = 11	😐 = 1	😞 = 0
Enjoyment	😊 = 11	😐 = 1	😞 = 0
OBSERVER			
“Unfortunately the book that goes with this session wasn’t available to Laurel when she did this session so Laurel had to use two separate books but the session went really well despite this”			
FACILITATOR			
“We used a couple of books with that because we didn’t actually have our resource fully made, so we have an Indigenous oral health book which we used, getting the teeth checked. And then I used a book that was actually used for more parents showing them the dental clinic, but it has the dress up of the kids and stuff so I used that book and sort of winged it, or adapted it to try and show the kids what happens at the dentist and what the dentist and what are all the tools and everything. So, considering I didn’t have the book, it wasn’t pretty, it wasn’t bad.”			

3. Strong tongue, strong mouth exercises

These exercises were done every time we attended and from observation the children were very good at participating in the exercises. As the program went along the children’s participation and enjoyment increased with this activity. By the end most children knew the order in which to do the exercises.

The smileys below represent both the enjoyment and attention.

- Session One: 17 children participated - 😊 = 15 😐 = 2 😞 = 0
- Session Two: 4 children participated - 😊 = 3 😐 = 1 😞 = 0
- Session Three: 18 children participated - 😊 = 18 😐 = 0 😞 = 0
- Session Four: 12 children participated - 😊 = 12 😐 = 0 😞 = 0
- Session Five: 17 children participated - 😊 = 17 😐 = 0 😞 = 0

STAFF RESPONSES

“It was really good, they loved it, it was fun”

“By end of the pilot children doing really well with exercises. First week some children were quieter and unsure whether to participate or not. Went well though. By week 4 everyone participated and even knew the order to do it in.”

“Yep that was good and actually just to give you some feedback that I’m working for (organisation named) as well and there’s a speech pathologist that goes out to the preschools and has a look at the kids and we’re doing lots of oral tone exercises and the sorts of things that you guys were doing and Laurel was teaching the children, so lots of those touching your nose and you know all those things are all the same types of activities that the speech pathologist is doing with the kids who have low oral tone, that need to improve some of the muscles in their mouth for speech sound productions. So it was interesting, I enjoyed watching the two things and going ‘oh ok that’s what Laurel’s doing’ that’s exactly what we do when kids are having difficulties.”

4. Songs

The three songs used throughout the program to reinforce key oral health messages were written specifically for the ETPTSS Project. They were introduced on different weeks of the program which meant that the children knew some songs better than others. For example; 'Don't share your toothbrush around' was introduced week 1 whereas 'Water is so good for you' was introduced week three. Therefore children had more opportunities to learn the Week 1 song over the week 3 song making the Eat Together song appear to be more popular.

The smileys below represent both the enjoyment and attention.

- Eat Together Play Together Song - Session One: 17 children participated 😊 = 15 😐 = 2 ☹️ = 0
- Eat Together Play Together and Gum Songs – Session Two: 4 children participated 😊 = 4 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0
- All three songs – Session Three: 18 children participated 😊 = 18 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0
- All three songs - Session Four: 12 children participated 😊 = 12 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0
- All three songs - Session Five: 17 children participated 😊 = 17 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0

STAFF RESPONSES

“Laurel’s song is nothing short of brilliant. That Tooth brushing... Eat Together Play Together don't share your toothbrush um, my kids sang that over and over and over and again. I've got to go back to that. Um but that Eat Together Play Together is fabulous, the song”

“If there was anything in terms of improving it, it would be to make the lyrics of the songs simpler, more simpler and more repetitive”

“Every time the kids see a photo of Laurel they break into singing the Eat Together Play Together song”

“Well they reckon the Eat Together Play Together song is still being sung, three months after they've learnt it so, Um, I think it was a hit in a way because it had the actions it was something, it gave a message where they could sing it and so they remembered it a lot better. And so, I think it was a bit of a success 'cause parents have been saying they are still singing the song.”

“The Gum song was good. They recognised it, they did the actions. I can't say that, because we only had five weeks, that they knew the song like the Eat Together song but they did do the actions, they did remember it and they did follow along. That song and the water song we didn't have enough time to teach them those songs properly”

“I can't remember the gum song which is interesting because I can remember the others.”

“Same as the Gum song, in fact I think the water song was even more removed, wasn't it? The gum song I think we all got by the end, don't forget your gums when you're brushing your teeth... I

think we knew the gum song better than the water song, I don't think anybody got a grip of the water song. We did get a grip on the gum song by the end of it.”

5. Small Group Activities

Each week after they had listened to the story the children would participate in an ETPTSS game. The children were divided into groups and the facilitator would take up to four children at a time to participate in the game. The children who weren't doing the game did regular activities with their teachers.

Each game was designed to compliment the story that had been read that day and helped to reinforce the message in the story. Through observation it appeared that all the games were well liked by the children.

Staff responses about the games in general:

“Feedback to teacher on what was done in game session would be good so they could reinforce the message.”

Observer/Facilitator/Staff Comments

Shopping Trolley/Pillowcase Game (Everyday Foods and Sometimes Foods) (17 children participated)

Attention 😊 = 17 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0 Enjoyment 😊 = 17 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0

STAFF RESPONSES

“This is really important that when we’re doing the training, they understand that less is more for visual information. So when you’re setting something out visually, for them to take it in and to comprehend, to make a choice, less is better yeah.”

“Loved it and I think that was a really good, and I do believe it was in the context of four and five years olds, that they actually did go away learning and knowing a lot more than when they started it. And I think that was reinforced the next week when they remembered it and they were a bit more up on it, it was like, that was a good game.”

“Oh yes that was a particular favourite of the kids. They all seemed to love that and they all got to know the difference between everyday foods and sometimes foods very quickly”

“Yep at lunch time every day now they are calling out stuff saying this is an everyday food and this is a sometimes food and then if they didn’t know they were asking questions like is this an everyday food or a sometimes food.”

Big Teeth, Big Toothbrush, Shaving Cream Game

(4 children participated – Resource Evaluator could only attend one day this week so observations were not done for the second day)

Attention 😊 = 4 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0 Enjoyment 😊 = 4 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0

OBSERVER

“This game was very well received – the children did a great job of brushing the teeth making sure to do the gums as well.”

FACILITATOR

“Yeah that was good, the kids... I was really impressed with how good they were, they learnt. Because what we would do, we would show them how, the oral health people told us how to brush your teeth. The hardest thing was that the tooth, the set of model teeth that we had and the big toothbrush was very hard for little hands but they took it on board very well and later on we used a normal toothbrush and that helped with them a lot more because they’ve only got small hands. But they took it on really well.”

Observer/Facilitator/Staff Comments

STAFF

“They loved it, they loved it but the good thing again is knowing they loved it and had fun which encouraged them to get involved in it. But they actually did leave that after the small session is was doing it properly and then when we revisited it in the next program they actually did it themselves. So they did learn from that and it was quite obvious just watching the kids and seeing how much they picked up.”

Packing Teddy’s lunchbox and Teddy’s birthday Game (18 children participated)

Attention 😊 = 18 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0 Enjoyment 😊 = 18 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0

FACILITATOR

“They really enjoyed because we coached them in the terms of Teddy needed a hand with getting his lunch packed, he was a bit nervous about coming to Transition this year and so the kids would help me pack his lunch. I guess in hindsight and we did do it later on, I wouldn’t have as much different types of food in the pillow case. You would, which I had a lot of, but they picked it up and if they picked up a, a special treat food we would say to them, do you think that’s right it goes to the lunch box and what type of food is that? And do you think we should leave at home for Teddy to have when he comes home from school? So they picked it up really well, but they took to it really well and then the second half of that game is Toothy Teddy has a birthday party and we said that because it’s a birthday party he gets some of the special treat foods but he also takes some of the everyday foods as well. And they took to that and they worked it out, it was really good because it is quite hard to know a donut is at the beginning because for some people it might be an everyday food.”

OBSERVER

“The kids were really involved but it’s very important to not have too much food as it got way too hectic. The food was decreased and it worked better. They are getting good at knowing what is an everyday food and what is a sometimes food’.

STAFF

“Yeah that was great, the kids really enjoyed that. I think again it was informative, simple and the kids really did walk away learning something, so it was really good.”

“Yeah that was great, I thought that was really good. And I really liked that as a way of helping kids. Instead of good food or bad food. You know, I reckon everyday food and sometimes, because they’re going to have it sometimes and it kind of legitimised that you are allowed to have that but you can’t have it all the time. But I thought that was a really good concept.”

Observer/Facilitator/Staff Comments

Dental Puppets and Dramatic Play (12 children participated)

Attention 😊 = 12 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0 Enjoyment 😊 = 12 😐 = 0 ☹️ = 0

OBSERVER

“Kids enjoyed the puppets very much. They loved them and treated them like real people wanting to cuddle and kiss them. They brushed their teeth even though the puppets didn’t have teeth.”

STAFF

“All the kids thoroughly enjoyed dressing up as dentists with a couple taking it very seriously with three children acting like real dentists telling the patient to drink water and not eat sometimes foods all the time etc’.

“Fantastic way of seeing how much information the kids had retained during the program especially with the sometimes and everyday foods. Each child was asked questions which reviewed what was learnt.”

“Yeah I’m really happy with the puppets. So much language, so much can come out of that play if you take the time to dress them up and let them go it’s just beautiful to watch you know and you get that lovely language and you know just, and using that book and it’s just terrific.”

I kind of think too, it takes that scariness away and in the end it’s just the person dressed in the gear that happens to look at your teeth and I think that was a good thing about it. It takes away that there’s some big monster to be a doctor or a dentist or nurse or things like that. Actually they’re people who chose to help people that way.”

“I was shocked how into it they got, not just the play acting and having fun part but actually what they knew. What they actually knew and they were little dentist and right down to the taking notes and you know writing all your results and you know questions and then come back I was really impressed with them.”

Packing Teddy's lunchbox and Teddy's birthday game – sometimes food and everyday food

Types of meals	Foods Named when children were asked to select food from the foods on offer.
Lunch box foods named in Teddy's lunchbox game	Chicken, grapes, watermelon, milk, banana, salad sandwich, carrot, fish, tomato, bun, strawberries, mandarin, yoghurt, lettuce, sandwich, pear, apple, orange, lollies, prawn, fruit salad, water, hotdog, frankfurt, corn.
Special treats named in Teddy's lunchbox game	Chips, chip sandwich, hotdog, donut, soft drink, strawberry, pizza, hot chips.
Birthday Food named in Teddy's game	Cake, ice cream, biscuit, water, party pies, vegetable soup, corn chips, chocolate, soft drink, frankfurts, donut, lollies, milk, hotdog, carrot, apple, chips, strawberries, grapes, lettuce, tomato, hamburger, fish.
<i>Sometimes foods</i> named	Chocolate, cakes, donuts, cookies, soft drink, lollies, ice cream cones, chips.
<i>Everyday foods</i> named	Corn, donut, banana, ice cream, mandarin, carrot, watermelon, chocolate, bread, orange, chicken, apple, grapes, strawberry.

6. Fruit and Vegetable taste testing

Numbers of children varied each session. From observation this appeared to be an extremely popular and much anticipated part of the program because from GTP staff feedback the children often talked about it when we weren't there. Some of the fussier eaters were more adventurous by the end. Everyone tried everything by the end even if it was to have a quick nibble then spit it out.

Fruits were favoured over vegetables. There was variation between the weeks with what they liked and didn't like and it is thought that this depended on what other fruits or vegetables were on offer as to how popular something was. They could have as much as they wanted of anything once they tried everything. Some children were in a hurry to get onto what they really loved and would say they didn't like a certain fruit or vegetable so that they could have more of something else. Only one child was very reluctant at the start to try anything but slowly over the weeks he ventured from just licking the fruit to actually biting it off, having a quick chew, then spitting it out by week five.

The smileys below represent both the enjoyment and attention.

- Session One: 17 children participated - 😊 = 15 😐 = 2 ☹ = 0
- Session Two: 4 children participated – Child who didn't enjoy as much had a staple in her gum 😊 = 3 😐 = 1 ☹ = 0
- Session Three: 18 children participated - 😊 = 17 😐 = 1 ☹ = 0
- Session Four: 12 children participated - 😊 = 12 😐 = 0 ☹ = 0
- Session Five: 17 children participated 😊 = 17 😐 = 0 ☹ = 0

STAFF RESPONSES

“Every child had a go, every child had things that they liked and more than even the ones who were um, who knew about gardens and stuff, there was at least a couple of others that really took on some of those vegies. Because fruit is easy, fruit is a much more easier to get it through than vegies. So we were very careful to make sure we had vegies as well and they, they took it on pretty well”

“Has been a really popular part of the program the whole way through. Some of the fussier eaters were more adventurous by the end. Everyone tried everything by the end even if it was to have a quick nibble then spit it out.

“Yeah do you know I was actually surprised how many of the kids had a go. Like even if they were reluctant to start and we had a few of them, but they actually did have a go and then as the weeks went on they actually just went and did it, you didn’t have to encourage them or it wasn’t like you’ve got to have a taste and all that. And I think that was really good and that showed it worked”

Table 1: Summary of children’s responses to fruit and vegetable tasting

Fruit	Week 1 (17 children)			Week 2 (4 children)			Week 3 (18 children)			Week 4 (12 children)			Week 5 (16 children)		
	Like	So So	Dislike	Like	So So	Dislike	Like	So So	Dislike	Like	So So	Dislike	Like	So So	Dislike
Snow peas															
Rockmelon	13	1	3	2	0	1							9	0	8
Kiwifruit	12	3	2	1	0	3							11	0	6
Red capsicum	9	3	5	3	0	1									
Carrot	14	2	1	3	0	0	8	0	8	7	0	3			
Cherry tomato	9	3	5	3	0	1	6	0	10				11	0	6
Beans	10	4	3	2	0	1	5	0	13						
Celery	10	3	4	3	0	1	5	0	12						
Pear				4	0	0	14	0	3				13	0	4
Yellow capsicum							2	1	15						
Peach							10	0	6						
Cucumber										6	0	5	6	0	11
Strawberries										11	0	1			
Corn										4	1	5	11	0	6
Cauliflower										5	1	6			
Honeydew Melon										7	0	4			
Watermelon													12	0	5

Dental staff visits

From observation the children appeared to be attentive and enjoyed the dental therapist session.



Whilst the stories and games were well received by both the staff and the children, suggestions were made during the interviews regarding ways to improve some of the games and songs. These included:

ACTIVITY	IMPROVEMENTS / SOLUTIONS
<p>Shopping Trolley/Pillowcase game (Everyday Foods and Sometimes Foods)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include more structure & direction for the children by introducing shopping cards into the game. Each card represents a food group for example; a dairy card, fruit card, vegetable card. Children then put the food on the card according to group. <p><i>"There was not enough direction in the shopping game; it was too, they were just diving. These kids can cope with structure. This is a great opportunity for Health and Education to come together in a meaningful way and for us to say 'ok, this is milk but where does it come from?' And what I could do is a tiny little cow up in the corner. It would be great."</i></p>

ACTIVITY	IMPROVEMENTS / SOLUTIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include poppers in the plastic food as a sometimes food. <p><i>"The other thing is we need to bring out the, the poppers sometimes with the water because we want them to make choices, sometimes they'll have a popper and sometimes they won't. So it's not every day."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the amount of food choices that are on the table at one time <p><i>"The kids were really involved but it's very important to not have too much food as it got way too hectic. The food was decreased and it worked better."</i></p>
Packing Teddy's lunchbox and Teddy's birthday Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow the game down as the children tended to focus on filling Toothy Teddy's lunchbox rather than focusing on the food. To achieve, make sure the children state whether the food is an everyday food or sometimes food and limit the amount of food that is placed into the lunchbox to 4-5 items. <p><i>"Maybe get kids to put one food in at a time as things get a bit confusing and busy. The kids were getting engrossed in putting as many things in as possible and were losing concentration – by making them categorise the food it could help calm the excitement down."</i></p>
The Songs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of introducing 3 songs throughout the program, adopt one song as the theme song so that the children can learn from week 1 such as the 'Eat together, play together but don't share your toothbrush around' <p>Provide the early childhood centre with a CD of all three songs for classroom use (outside of the program) that the children can listen to, reinforcing key messages.</p>

Discussion

“Oh look we’ve got a long road to go there, just look at the teeth and it’s not simplistic to be honest but what we’re doing is, we’re starting it off. What we’re saying is ‘you start here and you build on it and you keep building on it and you keep moving through it’ do you know what I mean?” (teacher comment)

From the comments raised through this preliminary resource evaluation within the GTP setting, the resources and activities generally worked well and were well received by the children. A more intensive program evaluation could review

- Any long term oral health and nutrition outcomes associated with program implementation
- Sustained behaviour change in relation to tooth brushing of the child and family

Benefits and limitations of evaluation methodology

A short turnaround timeframe restricted by classroom programming and funding deliverables impacted on the comprehensiveness of the evaluation process. For example, if there was more time available pre and post surveys could have been conducted and child interviews included in the evaluation process. Child interviews involve an ethics application which takes considerable time to prepare and review.

At times the evaluator had to multitask. Observing and recording the children’s responses to activities, video record activities and at times assist the facilitators. This naturally impacted on the reliability of observation. It also demonstrated the need to have an additional person involved whose only responsibility is to record. As the facilitator’s assistant saw it:

“I think you need, two people to actually run it, because you need the person who’s doing it, the person to sit there and help them and to do the role plays and the puppets and that you need a runner.... I really believe you need to have someone separate from the two people presenting it to do the observations and the evaluations every time. They need to do filming, the photos, they need to be able to go and get the things that we forget. And they need to be our third eye when we are focussed and doing what we’re doing on the whole big picture. So I believe it can be done with two but its better with three.”

The aim of using the video recorder was to capture the activities and the children’s response as a backup to the evaluators written observations. In the case where the observer may have missed something, watching the video at a later date would assist developing a more comprehensive picture however, the video concept was problematic at times due to the video camera malfunctioning and not working properly. The video recorder had to be hand held which impacted on the evaluator’s ability to record observations. A newer video recorder was eventually used which made the procedure a lot easier. Having a tripod would have helped with the footage as it sometimes was hard to hold the camera still for such a long time.

Videos provided a valuable backup for cases where direct observation resulted in ambiguous conclusions. However time constraints prevented detailed analysis of the video footage. Having said that, the videos have proved to be very valuable for the facilitator in reviewing program

implementation and to make positive changes to program delivery. They were extremely useful whilst writing the manual as they helped in writing up the formal session plans. Also they will be an effective training tool because they will be able to show examples of resource use in the classroom.

The visual roll was a very useful and important instrument for operating and evaluating the program. What the visual roll did was to give a list of the children's names with a picture of each child beside their name. This made it very easy to identify the children. We could also use the visual roll to mark attendance and to record the child's participation in activities. The capacity to include details regarding group dynamics was also useful and this information was informative in structuring groups for activities.

With the added complexity of videoing, it was important to have an observation record that was very quick and easy to complete. The layout of the observation record worked well. The smiley faces made it quick and easy to record a rating for each child. The spaces for comments allowed additional information to be recorded.

Rating the children's enjoyment and attention was done by only one observer, so has the potential to be influenced by their individual bias. While using these scales has an acceptable face validity, there was no scope or resources to test the criterion validity of the instruments used.

In spite of the limitations mentioned above the Action Research model employed in evaluating ETPTSS has led to significant improvements during the pilot process itself and has also resulted in key learnings that will ensure even greater success in any future development or rollout.

Program staffing and continuity between weekly sessions

This evaluation process has raised an important question regarding delivery of the program. This pilot implementation worked well not only because the resources were interesting and interactive, but because the delivery of the program was fun and the facilitator had good rapport and connection with the children. There is a certain ability associated with delivering programs to children that is essential for the program's success. There are also specific tools educators use to encourage children to be involved, prompt discussion, refocus children and to reinforce messages. Without these skills it is very difficult to conduct a program effectively within a limited timeframe.

This raises questions regarding the best mode of delivery. Training health workers to implement the program may not be as appropriate as training early childcare and preschool staff in program implementation. This would improve sustainability of the program by reinforcing and following up key messages. It was difficult for classroom teachers to reinforce key messages during the week as they did not have access to the resource kit. If early childhood/preschool staff were trained in the program, they would have access to a manual and the resource kits would stay at the preschool instead of with the health worker as originally intended. This would allow follow up to occur and would provide the opportunity for the resources to be incorporated into other classroom activities. The health worker could still be involved in program implementation but they would support the teacher as facilitator rather than facilitate the program. This means that both teachers and health workers would need to be trained in the program.

From a classroom perspective, another important point made by the teachers was the need for structure, prompts and links. The facilitators need to have skills in leading and guiding children from one activity to the next using prompts and links such as aids or words that connect activities together and support the reinforcing concept. They also need to be able to guide children through an activity whilst still enabling children to explore and interact with the activity. This reinforces the importance of having facilitators appropriately trained in working with children. Including lesson plans in the manual would help guide program delivery and provide a degree of structure to program implementation. It would also ensure consistency in delivery across facilitators.

Another key point raised was the importance of incorporating literacy and numeracy concepts into program design. These underpin the early childhood curriculum, so to ensure that programs are sustained and incorporated into ongoing classroom activities, the program itself must include these concepts. This makes it easier for staff to adopt and adapt throughout classroom learning themes. This continuity would also be enhanced if staff had access to program resources between the weekly program sessions:

Another issue that was raised was that the program would be easily transferable to other groups or cultures.

Some essential elements for success

Apart from the important issues of staffing and continuity, other elements and aspects of future success emerged from the results and from subsequent reflection.

With the fruit and vegetable tastings there was considerable variation in what the children liked from week to week. It seemed that children's reaction depended on what else was on offer. The children had to at least try everything on offer and if there was something on offer that they particularly liked then they would rush through the others saying they didn't like it so that they could get more of the one they preferred. This could explain the difference from week to week on whether they liked certain fruits or vegetables.

It has been suggested to include vegetables in meals or to serve them warm instead of raw because that's how we generally eat many vegetables for example in soups, pies or slices. This may have influenced vegetable intake. Also the weather may have influenced vegetable intake as it was colder on some days of the tastings.

The importance of cultural appropriateness became evident in some sessions. For example the dental therapy session appeared to go really well. However, whilst the therapist was accepted by the children some staff members mentioned on the day that the session could have been conducted with more cultural awareness.

It also became clear that presentation and teaching skills need to be excellent and that the program needs to link with the local context and curriculum:

"Just that I think this really does need to be the first part. Really does need to be the first part because I have seen previous programs going to the schools and it's put in as a whiz bang thing and if it's not presented in such a way that is useful and can be absorbed as an everyday part of the classroom it will not be carried through, I can tell you that now."

“It’s a core part of teaching. What we call fish hooks. So basically what you’re doing is you’re fish hooking into prior learning, be aware there that just getting down in front of kids and talking to them doesn’t mean that they’re remembering. We have to bring in the visual; we have to bring in the book or the physical or something to prompt them. So whether or not we’re ... just really quickly flicking through the book again ..., Don’t sit down and say ‘oh remember’ you know and everyone’s going to say ‘yeah, yeah, yeah’... just sitting down and say ‘Giddy, EAT TOGETHER PLAY TOGETHER...’you know suddenly you’re just launching in. You know, just be this real performer and you’ll get them.”

Contextual lessons learned from reflection on practice

Staff and facilitators felt that other contextual considerations might improve the longer term sustainability of outcomes for ETPTSS. These included:

- Involving the parents/carers in the program by inviting them into the classroom or giving the children something that they can take home that encourages home discussion on what they learnt during the program.
- A follow up session by the facilitators approximately three months after program implementation to measure what the children remember and to reinforce the key messages.

“You know what I’d probably like to see, maybe just one program at the very end of it all, where we invite the parents along and learn to...”

“Today we focused on, even if it was just a one page type of thing. Yeah and not like, not a whole book at the end, where they have to plough through but this is what they did on that day so that then they can go home. And even using like the language that they did, like today we looked at, everyday and sometimes foods, I know what that means but maybe their mums and dads might not know and that way when they go home and talk about it, as a parent if my child did that I’d go ‘oh wow that’s great that they’ve learnt that, I’ll keep that going’ you know or a weekly report to go home. “We sang this song and here are the words and today we focused on...” even if it was just a one page type thing”

But maybe something in the program there has to be something that is incorporatedthat you have to ensure a follow up visit and it might be just a rock up one day with puppets and say we’ve come back to visit to see if you are brushing your teeth or go back and dress them as dentists. Or just have a follow up three months down the track and see are they, has it changed anything. I don’t know one month, three months or whatever.

Recommendations

The following key recommendations relate to evaluation, resource design and program implementation:

Design Recommendations

- If resource effectiveness is being measured and a video recorder is used, an independent person is responsible for recording. This will free the facilitator and his/her assistant up to run the program.
- The program's instruction guide includes templates of teaching aides and lesson plans for activities. This will ensure that consistency occurs within the program no matter who is facilitating.
- Activities are structured and the degree of choice available to children in the games is reduced so that control over the situation is maintained.
- Adopt a theme song for the program which is reinforced every session and provide a CD of all songs to the learning centre so that all the songs are known and the message they give are learnt

Implementation recommendations:

- Early childhood/preschool teachers to be trained in the program with health workers in some form of a support role.
- Both teachers and health workers are trained in the program so that they have an understanding of the program.
- Vegetables are served either warm or in a mixed meal that is prepared ahead of time e.g. zucchini slice, pumpkin soup.
- Dental therapists undertake cultural awareness training.
- An early childhood professional plus Aboriginal health promotion officer work as a team to provide facilitator training.
- A parent/carer component is included in the implementation phase.
- A follow up visit is conducted three months after program completion to review knowledge retention.
- A comprehensive evaluation is conducted to assess longer term impacts and outcomes of the program.

Conclusion

The Eat Together Play Together Strong Smiles program and its activities were well received by staff and children. The program worked well in delivering key nutrition and oral health messages. The findings provide insights into best practice in resource design and project implementation.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Fruit and Vegetables



Fruit and Veggie Tasting

The fruit and vegetable tasting sessions are after the other sessions. This is to get the children to taste foods that they may not have tried before. Evidence shows that children need to taste foods at least 10 to 14 times before they may learn to like them so it is necessary to try and get them used to the foods. Fruit and vegetable tasting is also good for strengthening muscles that children need to have strong facial muscles and by encouraging chewing on foods that are harder (carrots apples etc) it helps the eustation tubes and therefore can help with otitis media.

Get the children to at least taste the foods and if they don't like it then they can put it in the scrap bowl. Say to them that they have to try it and if they don't like it that's OK but they have to at least give it a go before they put it in the scrap bowl.

Utensils Needed:

- Two (2) knives
- Two (2) cutting boards
- Two (2) sets of tongs
- One (1) Air tight Container to hold fruit*
- One (1) Air tight container to hold vegetables*
- One (1) vegetable peeler

Preparation:

Cut up fruit and vegetables into bite sized pieces in the morning before going to preschool and put into the air tight containers provided in the kit

Method:

For the tastings put a bowl in front of every child to use as a scrap bowl as well as the bowl that you put the fruit and vegetable in so that you can see what the children are eating and what is not being eaten. Slice the fruit and veggies into small bite size pieces or slices. Use more veggies than fruit if possible as children are more hesitant to eat their veggies than fruit (and the fruit has fructose sugars). Tell the children to at least try all the foods (even having a lick) and then if they don't like it then put it in the scrap bowls.

Try and mimic the same foods for all the different classes (i.e. 2 classes a week, every week bring the same foods for each) Try and change the foods each week to include at least one new food. Try and not buy the foods that you know they will eat (e.g. apples, oranges etc) and use the foods that are in season.

Equipment:

- 1 x Plastic cereal bowl per child
- Plastic cereal bowls for discarded food
- Small tongs to pick up fruit with
- 1-2 platters to hold fruit and veg

Method:

- Get children to wash hands before coming to the lunch table.
- Setting out a bowl for each child put a piece of each fruit and vegetable into it.
- Put another bowl in front of the fruit bowl for every child to use as a scrap bowl so that you can see what the children are eating and what not is being eaten. We tell the children to at least try all the foods (even having a lick) and if they don't like it then put it in the scrap bowls.
- Try and mimic the same foods for all the different classes (i.e. I was doing 2 classes a week and every week I bought the same fruits and vegetables) I try to change the foods each week to include at least one new food. I also try and not buy the foods that you know they will eat (e.g. apples, oranges, bananas etc).

Attachment 2: Recording Sheet

☹ = No 😐 = Somewhat 😊 = Yes

Eat Together Play Together – Session 1 – Lets Get Started

Date: / / Number of Children: Boys: Girls:

Introduction - Why Foods are Important.

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊

Comment:

Teddy and Tilda Go Shopping - Big Book Story

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊

Comment:

Shopping Trolley/Pillowcase Game (every day foods and sometimes foods)

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊

Comment:

Review

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊
	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊	☹	😊	😊

Comment:

Strong Mouth, Strong Tongues, Strong Words Exercises

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		

Comment:

Eat Together Play Together Song

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		

Comment:

Fruit and Veg Tasting

Child ID	Enjoyment			Attention			Existing Knowledge		

Comment:

Fruit/Veg Tried (Write the Fruit tried at the top of each Column)

Child ID													

Fruit/Veg Tried (Write the Veg tried at the top of each Column)

Child ID													

Other Comments for the day

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Attachment 3: Staff Interview Questions

SECTION ONE

Week 1 - What can you tell me about the:

- Introduction – Why are Foods Important
- Teddy and Tilda go shopping – Big book
- The shopping trolley pillow case game
- Review
- Strong mouth, strong tongues, strong words exercises
- Eat together play together song
- Fruit and vegetable tasting

Week 2 - What can you tell me about the:

- Natural habits – big book
- Bit teeth, big toothbrush, shaving cream game
- The gum song

Week 3 - What can you tell me about the:

- Toothy Teddy – big book
- Interaction with Toothy Teddy book
- The water song
- Everyday foods, sometimes foods game

Week 4 - What can you tell me about the:

- Getting teeth checked at school – big book
- Puppets
- Role playing kit – dress up as dentists

Week 5 - What can you tell me about the:

- Review

SECTION TWO

Other Questions

- Do you think the activities worked with the kids?
- Was the language appropriate for the needs of the children?
- Was there anything you thought didn't work well?
- How did the facilitator relate to the kids? Not at all – Not really – Fairly well – Really well
- Did the kids mention anything that related to the program on other days e.g. sometimes food, everyday foods?
- Do you feel the tooth brushing message has got through to the kids (are they talking about brushing their teeth, are they practising/mimicking etc)?
- Do you do any of the sessions during the week when we aren't there? Yes/No and if yes which ones?
- Has there been any change in what they are eating or what they want to eat?
- Do they appear to be drinking more water or asking or going to the water more often?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

References

1. NSW Department of health. Communicating positively: A guide to appropriate Aboriginal terminology. North Sydney, 2004
2. Centre for Oral Health Strategy New South Wales. NSW messages for a healthy mouth. Gladesville, NSW, 2007
3. Woolworths. Fresh food kids: every day or sometimes. Woolworths, 2009. Available online at <http://www.freshfoodkids.com.au/kids/learn/all-about-food/>.