

# Swan Hill South Kindergarten Case Study- 20 years of Smiles 4 Miles



PHOTO – Pictured, Jenny Nethercote and Lydia Condely

Swan Hill South Kindergarten have been in the Smiles4Miles program now for the most part of 20 years. Originally, we formed part of the Healthy Achievement Program to provide a framework that was designed to help Swan Hill South Kindergarten enhance a whole service approach to health and wellbeing. The program aligned key policies and guidelines including the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, the National Quality Standard and Quality Improvement Plans. Over the years, we have been supported by the Swan Hill Health Promotion team to enhance existing structures, programs and practices and develop early connections to support children and families’ understanding of services available within our local community.

The best part of the Smiles4Miles program for Swan Hill South Kindergarten would have to be how the key messages of the Smiles4Miles program “Eat Well”, “Drink Well”, “Clean Well” are embedded into our daily program. Each day we have conversations with the children and follow simple strategies that promote healthy eating and drinking habits and promote good oral health.



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. Each term we link in one key message, such as “Drink Well” which highlights the importance of water and milk as the best drink. This extends to providing milk each day for children to appreciate healthier options, along with shared fruit/vegetable platters prepared by families, educators and children. Children get excited when they see the Health Promotion team dress up as fruits and vegetables on their in-service visits and introduce “Eat a Rainbow” experiences. The children are thrilled to receive take home dental packs after their dental screenings and also have the opportunity to enter into “Eat Move Smile” colouring competitions.



Working collaboratively with Swan Hill Health promotion has supported our service and educators to further promote the key messages of Smiles4Miles. Children just love ‘Peggy’ Platypus and ‘Kate’ Kangaroo, who visit each child’s home and encourage pictures of their adventures to source and promote healthy options and draw pictures of their favourite fruits and vegetables. Nude Food days at our service also build on the “Eat Well” element, not to mention the interactive themed books and clean well activities. Team leader, Bronte has been supportive in providing “Educators corner”, an online platform our service accesses to highlight key messages in our monthly newsletter. We also distribute Swan Hill Health Promotions Early Years Newsletter “Eat Move Smile” each term which includes recipes and suggested books – along with further messages to promote the “Eat Well” message for children and families.

Thank you so much to the Swan Hill Health Promotion team for working in partnership with Swan Hill South Kindergarten over the past 20 years and recognising us as one of the original pilot sites! We are most grateful for your ongoing connection to our kindergarten community to improve the oral health of children, their families, early childhood educators and the wider community – Swan Hill Health Team