

Message from First Smiles Matter

Though temporarily out of sight, the **First Smiles Matter** program has all of our VIProviders and children on our minds. We hope you and your families are well and healthy.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control asks that all childcare programs which remain open to “change or stop daily group activities that may promote transmission of the virus” to others via salivary droplets. The Office of Head Start has recommended that tooth brushing in classrooms be suspended until further notice.

While this is a reasonable recommendation, let’s help families understand the importance of a brushing routine at home, especially now! The American Academy of Pediatrics has a promotion that we completely support called **Brush, Book, Bed**. To assist families in understanding the importance of good oral care, we have attached a Brush, Book, Bed handout along with a tooth brushing calendar to help support the morning and evening brushing routine at home. This new parent handout has a few important reminders, like using toothpaste with fluoride to help protect the teeth from getting cavities, milk with meals and water in between.

Is there a safe alternative to tooth brushing?

Yes, we can have the children swish or even just drink water after a meal or snack. This can help to wash away food particles that remain and helps to neutralize acids in the mouth from the bacteria that break down the foods. Is this as good as brushing...no, but this is better than not brushing. If you have choices for snacks, think about a carbohydrate and a protein together, like cheese with crackers. Other good choices would be low sugar yogurt and apple slices, even milk and crackers. The combination of a protein along with a carbohydrate has been shown to help minimize the acid damage.

Until we meet again... please know we are here to help ~ however we can.

Be well,

Your First Smiles Matter Team

Andrea, Crystal, Dave, Debra, Jackie, Kasey and Margaret

Questions? Contact us!

Margaret.Perry@pima.gov

Office: 520-724-7902

First Smiles Matter Program

First Things First Grantee- Pima North & Pima South

Pima County Health Department