

# #HappyTeeth

## SCMA Oral Health Community Challenge Project IMPACT REPORT

### **Problem Statement:**

Children aged under two are not routinely receiving dental care from health professionals until they go to a ELC setting (predominately a nursery) and are registered with a dentist. Childminders lack the confidence and/or knowledge to introduce toothbrushing into their settings while meeting national guidance.

### **Fund Outcomes:**

- Improve Infant Oral Health
- Increase opportunities for people to improve oral health and well-being

### **Project Overview:**

The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) is the only organisation in Scotland dedicated to supporting childminders. We work with our members to help improve the wellbeing and outcomes for Scotland's children.

This has allowed us to provide training and support to childminders in Scotland to implement supervised tooth-brushing within their childcare settings - and to work with parents to support them to develop a healthy oral regime with their children from an early age.

### **Childminders are uniquely placed to work with both the children and parents:**

- 80% of childminders work directly with under three's in a home-setting, this equates to approximately 3,200 childminders across Scotland
- A home setting helps to establish routines with children, tooth-brushing being a key daily activity to incorporate into their regular routine
- The routines introduced by Childminders will be shared with parents to encourage them to continue this at home, becoming a regular habit
- Childminders live and work in their local communities and are well placed to signpost parents and support them to access other local services.

### **Project Aims:**

- Childminders have increased knowledge of establishing and supervising toothbrushing routines with young children.
- Children aged under two are introduced to toothbrushing.
- Parents establish oral health routines with their children.

## What has SCMA done to address this?

We have and continue, to provide training and support to childminders in Scotland to implement supervised tooth-brushing within their childcare settings. We have also included parental involvement links to work with parents to support them to develop a healthy oral regime with their children from an early age.

## We are doing this through:

- Developing and providing a training video for childminders.
- Developing and hosting fun 'Freddie the Flossiosaurus' interactive sessions for children and their childminders.
- Providing childminders with the necessary resources to introduce toothbrushing and establishing it as a key daily routine in their setting.



## We have also:

- Created and issued our Happy Teeth Activity Pack to all 3,500 members.
- Delivered six face-to-face Network Meeting events (pre-COVID-19) to 62 childminders, including providing them with resource packs to support toothbrushing to around 250 children.
- Created a dedicated Happy Teeth webpage on our website providing support and signposting childminders to further resources as well as being able to sign up to the project. We receive on average more than 10,000 hits to the SCMA website each week.
- Introduced 'Freddie the Flossiosaurus' into our sessions, and we have hosted three virtual training/activity sessions for childminders and their children.

## Since re-shaping our delivery model in August, SCMA has:

- Delivered three fun, interactive sessions as part of our children-centred pilot, with 12 childminders, and approximately 36 children.
- Eight out of 12 childminders provided feedback to shape and enhance further sessions (66%).
- Created a bespoke Happy Teeth training video - this has been sent to all childminders who have registered to take part in our 'fun' sessions.
- Sent Freddie to a childminder to have 'Fun with Freddie at Home' to allow follow-up learning through play. This was on a trial basis and once we have evaluated the effectiveness of the trial, we hope Freddie can continue to visit other childminders across Scotland.
- Created a 'Companion Guide' to support the Happy Teeth project including suggestions for at home learning.
- 125 resource and information packs have been delivered to date to support the Happy Teeth project.

**What is the SCMA Happy Teeth project?**

'Happy Teeth' is a SCMA three-year project funded by the Scottish Government's Oral Health Community Challenge Fund.

We work alongside the NHS Child Smile Programme to provide support and opportunities for childminders across Scotland to encourage and implement supervised tooth-brushing within their childcare settings and to promote this within the child's own home. This project also enables SCMA to continue our important work in the community - especially crucial in areas of need - and highlight the invaluable role that childminders play in supporting children and families.

**How can childminders help support 'Happy Teeth'?**

Childminders are ideally placed in a home-from-home environment to encourage children of all ages to take a keen interest in their oral health. Providing a relaxed, fun and friendly environment to help boost children's understanding of the importance of good oral health, childminders can help children and families forge a routine and a keen interest in looking after teeth.

**What is the aim of 'Happy Teeth'?**

- Encourage childminders to work with parents to support them to develop a healthy oral regime at home with their children from an early age.
- Invite childminders to a series of informal, virtual interactive and learning sessions.
- Support over 1,500 children and families with oral health over the next three years.
- Reach more than 1,000 childminders across various areas in Scotland.



## What are the outcomes of these activities?

We have, and continue to contribute to the Scottish Government's oral health improvement plan. In particular, addressing oral health inequalities, with our focus on working within areas of highest deprivation, and targeting vulnerable families through our community childminding populations.

By working to improve the oral health of children in the early years, SCMA has provided a holistic approach to supporting health and wellbeing, and by incorporating oral health routines into childminders' daily activities, SCMA has supported children and families to adopt important life skills and contribute to health improvement outcomes.

We have supported childminders and enhanced their use of existing strategic frameworks including the National Performance Framework, Curriculum for Excellence, GIRFEC and Setting the Table through linking our materials and training.

Childminders have gained knowledge and confidence to discuss oral health with their minded children, adopting toothbrushing routines into their day as well as working with families on ensuring these activities continue at home through our home learning materials and 'Bingo' game.



## Through child-centred interactive sessions, we have also directly supported children to:

- Identify and practice good toothbrushing habits with 'Freddie the Flossiosaurus'.
- Explored other ways they can keep their teeth healthy.
- Discuss the importance and share an experience of going to see a dentist.
- Use songs, games and activities to learn about good oral health habits, keeping learning fun.

By using Freddie, and other child-centred imagery, and incorporating them into children's play (and we know children **learn** through first-hand experience), our oral health messages have become embedded.

## Childminders tell us how we've made a difference:

*"My mindee loved brushing her baby dolls teeth during the session, and asked to do her own teeth after."*

*"Thanks for today - the children loved Freddie they really enjoyed colouring in the teeth. They told the mums on pick-up we were brushing teddies teeth! The resources you sent beforehand were a great help as I printed them off. Thanks again!"*

*"We enjoyed drawing a clean tooth and a dirty tooth. We also drew a tooth brush the colour of my little ones at home. We 'chatted' later about the drawing and she took it home to show her parents."*

*"My little one - along with me - sang the song to the after school children!"*

*"Also one wee extra cute thing, one of the pre-school boys just taught my wee one how to say 'teeth'."*

