Promoting Health and Wellbeing in Early Childhood Settings

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“We would like to acknowledge this land that we meet on today is the traditional lands for the Kaurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country.

We also acknowledge the Kaurna people as the custodians of the greater Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kaurna people today.”

Context – policy & research consensus

- Importance of early childhood – promotion, prevention & early intervention
- Comprehensive, integrated approaches to early learning, childcare, family support & health services
- Alter the social gradient to reduce inequity and focus on ‘most vulnerable’

Children’s Centres

Opportunities for ‘joined up’ action to improve outcomes for children:

- Child health & development
- Child safety
- Family wellbeing
- Early learning (> future educational achievement)

Achieving improved outcomes for children

1. Build child & family-friendly communities & environments
2. Deliver multiple, integrated services – responsive to needs & contexts
3. Ensure accessible service pathways
4. Target programs & coordinate care planning for unmet and additional needs

Health promotion: Keys to success

- Values-driven development of ‘healthy’ policies
- Challenge the unequal distribution of power & opportunity
- Raise awareness of the determinants of health & wellbeing
- Work inclusively, respectfully, collaboratively and flexibly
- Value the wisdom, experiences and contribution of community members
A ‘settings’ approach to promoting health & wellbeing

What creates health in our setting?
What changes are required?

- The way the organisation works
- Relationships with the world outside its boundaries
- Our understandings of how health & wellbeing are created

8 specific aims

1. Strengthen child & family-friendly communities
2. Maximise children’s healthy eating
3. Promote active play
4. Increase safety of the environment
5. Promote children’s self-care
6. Protect child & maternal health & wellbeing
7. Support & strengthen parent capacity
8. Increase equitable access to health services
Capacity building action areas

- Policies & supportive environments
- Resource allocation & Infrastructure
- Workforce planning & development
- Partnerships & links
- Planning & evaluation processes
- Programs & services

Another example...maximising children’s healthy eating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity building action area</th>
<th>Evidence-based action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policies &amp; supportive environments</td>
<td>Age appropriate nutrition policy, best practice policy for food supply</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource allocation &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>Ready availability of fluoridated tap water, Access to standardised nutrition information, Access to on-site kitchen facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workforce planning &amp; development</td>
<td>All workers trained in nutrition, healthy weight, oral health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships &amp; links</td>
<td>Eat Well &amp; Active communities, Work with parents as partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs &amp; services</td>
<td>Family cooking activities, Community garden, Community Foodies</td>
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Challenges

- Working both within and beyond our silos
- Developing a shared language and understanding
- Enhancing our capacity to address inequities within a universal approach
- Working in partnership: families, communities, agencies.