

A partnership approach to healthy eating and oral health

Yappera Children's Service, Thornbury

Yappera Children's Service is an Aboriginal Community controlled, governed and managed Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Service in the northern suburb of Thornbury in Melbourne. Yappera provides long day care services and a kindergarten for over 70 children.



The Yappera Team are passionate advocates for the health and wellbeing of children and families, championing oral health and embedding it into Yappera's everyday commitment to good health for children and families.

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Thornbury, Victoria

Yappera has formed strong partnerships with local organisations such as the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and Banyule Community Health, ensuring that children and their families have access to high quality healthy eating and oral health information, resources and services.



Families are linked with dental services through a partnership with VAHS who provide a dental screening program at Yappera. This partnership ensures that all children have a regular oral health assessment and families are supported with information about how to access local dental services. Educators and the visiting dental team provide a relaxed environment for children to have their teeth examined and follow-up appointments booked at VAHS when required.

The deadly Healthy Lifestyle Team from VAHS runs regular healthy eating and physical activity sessions with children at Yappera via their Coach Program. Coach uses fun and active games to teach 3 and 4 year old children about living a healthy life through getting active, eating fruit and vegies, drinking water and staying smoke free.



Children at Yappera having fun in the VAHS Coach program.
Photo: VAHS Healthy Lifestyle Team

VAHS, in collaboration with Quit Victoria, developed 'Deadly Dan at the League', a book for pre-school children that aims to spread the word about healthy living within Victorian Aboriginal Communities. Children at Yappera love it when Deadly Dan comes to visit! Click [here](#) for a great article about 'Deadly Dan at the League'.

Deadly Dan makes a visit to Yappera.
Photo: VAHS Healthy Lifestyle Team



Since 2015, Yappera has implemented Dental Health Service Victoria’s (DHSV) Smiles 4 Miles oral health program. The program aims to improve the oral health of children and their families and focusses on three key areas: Eat Well, Drink Well and Clean Well. With support from Banyule Community Health’s Smiles 4 Miles Coordinator and the VACCHO Nutrition team, Yappera has submitted a Smiles 4 Miles award application to DHSV and is eagerly awaiting the outcome.

VACCHO and the Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) have worked closely with Yappera’s wonderful Cook on the menu for children in long day care. Yappera’s healthy, delicious menu reflects the care and commitment of Yappera’s Cook and the whole Yappera Team. Yappera’s menu has been assessed by HEAS and meets the menu planning guidelines for long day care, which is a great achievement.



VACCHO Healthy, Deadly Lunch Box resources

The Yappera Team have also provided valuable input and guidance around the development of healthy, deadly lunch box resources. Produced by VACCHO, Yappera staff are using the information books, lunch cooler bags and posters with children and families.

Stacey Brown, Chief Executive Officer at Yappera, is a strong advocate for the health and wellbeing of children, families and staff at Yappera. Stacey provides expertise, advice and support to DHSV in the development of programs and resources to support good dental health of Aboriginal children. Stacey was announced as the Community Oral Health Champion winner at the DHSV 2017 Public Oral Health Awards. This is a wonderful achievement for Stacey and the Yappera team, recognising the work they do to support and promote oral health.

“Yappera’s approach and success when promoting oral health and nutrition for children and families is through the ongoing support of our partner services and organisations including VACCHO, DHSV and VAHS. This enables Yappera to provide a range of useful resources for children and families that promote oral health and nutrition but also the capacity to offer inclusive programs and services including dental checks and menu advice. We’ll continue to provide the best possible services, resources and a range of useful information for our families.”

Stacey Brown, Chief Executive Officer, Yappera Children’s Service

Stacey recognises the importance of strengthening the capacity of Yappera’s staff to promote dental health and allocates time for staff to participate in oral health and nutrition training. Workshops are

regularly scheduled to train and update staff on how to support good dental health of the children and families that use their service.

The fantastic team at Yappera are always so welcoming of healthy eating and oral health initiatives and go above and beyond in their support of new programs and partners.

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