

Case Study 2

How Smiles 4 Miles creates ongoing pathways to improve oral health and nutrition

Smiles 4 Miles supports early childhood services to improve oral health and nutrition in higher risk Victorian communities, particularly in areas like the Yarra Ranges where water is only partially fluoridated. Established in 2003, the program provides a structured pathway for services to create healthier environments for children and families.

In 2025, 31 services across the Yarra Ranges registered, with 15 achieving the Smiles 4 Miles award. The award recognises services that demonstrate a commitment to healthy eating and oral health through activities such as policy development, professional learning, menu assessment, family engagement and children's learning experiences. Guided by the Together for Health Partnership, services are supported to:

- Align menus with the Menu Planning Guidelines
- Participate in the Cooks Network for peer learning and support
- Progress towards the Healthy Places Healthy Futures Healthy Eating and Oral Health priority area.

This connected approach creates a clear pathway for continuous improvement. Services achieving the Smiles 4 Miles award receive advanced standing within Healthy Places Healthy Futures, while the Cooks Network connects cooks across the Yarra Ranges, Monash, Whitehorse, Boroondara and Manningham to share ideas, resources and practical solutions.

Since joining Smiles 4 Miles in 2023, Oxley Kids has reviewed its menu using the Menu Planning Guidelines, completed a FoodChecker assessment and actively participated in the Cooks Network. These actions supported the service to achieve advanced standing in the Healthy Eating and Oral Health priority area of Healthy Places Healthy Futures. Together, Smiles 4 Miles, the Menu Planning Guidelines, the Cooks Network and Healthy Places Healthy Futures create an integrated system that supports healthier early years environments and sustained improvements in children's oral health, nutrition and wellbeing.



It has been wonderful to receive support from the Yarra Ranges Cooks Network and use the Menu Planning Guidelines to review our menu and ensure we are providing the best possible food choices for our children. The provision of training in the use of FoodChecker was particularly beneficial. We are also proud to have our service recognised with the Smiles 4 Miles award.

Jess Thomas from Oxley Kids



Image: Fernhill Preschool accepting their Smiles 4 Miles Award