

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NSW TO PROMOTE CHILD HEALTH? A REPORT FROM AREA HEALTH PROMOTION UNITS

This brief report lists some examples of current programs for children's health conducted by the Area health promotion units. The examples are based on summaries provided to the *NSW Public Health Bulletin* in May 1998 by the health promotion units in response to a request for information from the Bulletin.

Area health services in NSW, in addition to their care and treatment services, have a range of services and programs working to improve children's health. In addition to the work of the health promotion units outlined here, health improvement and health promotion programs are carried out by:

- early childhood health services
- community child and family services
- public health units.

Although many programs are specifically designed to address a single health issue, such as skin cancer, they often implement strategies through particular settings, such as a school or child health centre. The alternative is for the setting itself to be taken as the starting point. In this case, programs (such as the health promoting schools program) may address multiple health issues, depending on local relevance and need.

## EXAMPLES OF STATEWIDE PROGRAMS<sup>a</sup>

### Sun protection in schools

Expected outcomes: Improved awareness and knowledge of sun protection, and reduction in unprotected sun exposure.

### School canteen programs

Expected outcomes: School canteens adopt and implement nutrition policies and provide healthy food choices.

### Nutrition in child care centres

Expected outcomes: Child care centres adopt and implement nutrition policies and provide nutritious food according to specified standards.

### Playground-injury prevention in schools and council playgrounds

Expected outcomes: Reduced incidence of serious injuries in school and council playgrounds. Playgrounds conform to the safety guidelines of the Australian Standards Association.

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(a) In this report, 'statewide' refers to programs that have been implemented widely across NSW over the last five years or more. In most cases this has involved coordination between the NSW Health Department and Area health services. It does not necessarily mean that all programs are current in all Areas.

### Scalds prevention

Expected outcomes: Reduced incidence of serious hot-water burns in children.

### Tobacco sales to minors

Expected outcomes: Compliance of retailers with legislation banning sales of tobacco to minors (aged under 18 years).

### Health promoting schools

Expected outcomes: Schools foster learning and practice of health-related behaviours and provide a health-enhancing environment.

## EXAMPLES OF HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS CONDUCTED THROUGH PRIMARY HEALTH-CARE SERVICES<sup>b</sup>

### Immunisation

Expected outcomes: Increased proportion of age-appropriate immunisation rates.

### Breast-feeding

Expected outcomes: Increased proportion of women breast-feeding.

### Early childhood injury prevention program (ECIPP)

Expected outcomes: New parents have increased awareness of risks, and knowledge of safety practices.

## EXAMPLES OF AREA PROGRAMS<sup>c</sup>

### Primary school asthma program (Western Sydney)

Expected outcomes: Increases in confidence in school staff in dealing with emergency asthma episodes.

### Child car restraint program (South Western Sydney)

Expected outcomes: Correct installation of child restraints and use of authorised restraint-fitting stations.

### Eating disorders program (Central Sydney)

Expected outcomes: Improved body image among female high school students.

### Home safety parties (Northern Rivers)

Expected outcomes: Reduced incidence of serious injuries occurring in the home.

### Sports injury prevention (Northern Sydney)

Expected outcomes: Reduced incidence of serious injuries. Changes in sporting organisations' knowledge, policies and practices.

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(b) A wide variety of preventive and health promotion programs are conducted through primary health care services, particularly through early childhood health services, across NSW. This list contains a limited number of examples.

(c) These examples are derived from information provided in responses to the request for information from the Bulletin.

### **Suicide prevention (South Western Sydney)**

Expected outcomes: Reduction in the rate of youth suicide.

### **Youth centres smoking program (Hunter)**

Expected outcomes: Adoption of smoke-free environments in all youth centres funded by the Department of Community Services.

## **RELATED REPORTS**

### **Sun protection**

*Sun protection survey of primary schools in Northern Sydney.* (1998, Northern Sydney)

*Shade audit competition evaluation.* (1996, 1997, Northern Sydney)

*Sun protection in the Central Sydney Area Health Service: a discussion paper.* (1997, Central Sydney)

*Survey of sun protection practices in primary schools.* (1996, Central Sydney)

*Sun protection plan 1997–2000.* (1997, Central Sydney)

*Strategic plan for skin cancer control 1997–2000.* (1997, South Western Sydney)

### **Nutrition**

Mathews R, Williams L. Caring for children: a local child care initiative goes statewide. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 1995; 5(2): 49–54.

Plaskett J, Cook L, Hodge W. *Nutrition on long day care centres: implementing 'Caring for Children' in Central Sydney.* (1994, Central Sydney)

Karen N, Whitworth A, Lane S, Amantides S. *Caring for children—Northern Sydney.* (1994)

### **Health promoting schools**

*Health promoting schools report.* (1997, Northern Sydney)

Palmer S, Mitchell J, Woodrow S. *The health promoting schools project.* (South Western Sydney)

*Working with schools: an introductory guide for health workers.* (1997, South Western Sydney)

*Sun protection and nutrition survey.* (1998, Western Sydney)

### **Other**

'Reflections'—a body image program for young women. (1997, Central Sydney)

*NSW youth sports injury report.* (1997, Northern Sydney)

Taggart J. *Incorrect installation of child restraints: an observational study in South West Sydney of a preventable public health program.* (1995, South Western Sydney)

Kidsafe. *Playground safety reports.*

*Youth suicide prevention strategic plan 1997–2001.* (1997, South Western Sydney)

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