

BASCD 2024 Abstract #26**Lambeth early action partnership (LEAP):
oral health promotion in the earliest years**

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Background:

In 2019/20 three-year-olds in the most deprived areas of the country were nearly three times as likely to have dental decay than those in the least deprived areas. The London borough of Lambeth is the 39th most deprived local authority in the country, with 15.3% living in income deprivation. The Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) delivers a suite of preventative services aimed at improving outcomes for babies, young children and families living in areas of deprivation.

Objectives:

In response to the gap in local early years oral health promotion (OHP) activities and high rates of inequalities in the area, LEAP included OHP as part of its Diet and Nutrition strand of work. This report summarises the activities carried out as part of this work.

Methods:

LEAP's OHP service took an evidence-based approach, focussing on provision of toothbrushes and toothpaste to families with young children; targeted supervised toothbrushing in early years settings; workforce training for local early years practitioners; OHP at local community events; and partnership working with local dental practices to increase dental check-up for children under one year old.

Results:

Over the lifetime of the service nearly 100 childcare providers in 31 settings were trained to provide supervised toothbrushing in their settings and over 800 children were supported to brush their teeth daily whilst in their care; 77% of these children lived in the two most deprived quintiles of deprivation. Over 6000 toothbrush/toothpaste packs were distributed via different networks, and nearly 300 community events were attended by OHP, providing oral health support and advice to local families.

Conclusion:

LEAP delivered an evidence-based OHP service that was well-aligned with national policy and priorities. A greater focus on universal early years OHP, especially in areas of high deprivation, would support wider public health efforts to improve the health of children.

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