

Children and Young People Committee

Inquiry into Children's Oral Health

Evidence from Vale Flying Start

Response to Designed to Smile Programmed

The Flying Start programme was introduced by the Welsh Government (WG) to offer help and guidance to families with very young children who live in specific school catchment areas.

Children up to 3 years and 11 months may be eligible for extra help to get them off to the best start in life. Flying Start supports parents by providing health advice, learning skills support and practical ideas to help them guide their children towards a brighter future.

Flying Start in the Vale of Glamorgan is based in three wards in the northern part of Barry. These areas were identified using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. It has a larger percentage of single parents, teenage parents and workerless families.

The Designed to Smile programme is operating in all five childcare settings in Vale Flying Start. The response to the programme from the settings has been very positive, with all reporting that the children have been eager to engage in the programme. Staff report that the children have adapted to having their teeth brushed after having snacks and have settled into the new routine. Some parents have advised the settings that at home children are asking to have their teeth brushed after meals, so the programme has a positive effect on home life.

The Health Visiting service has been involved with the under Ones, discussing dental hygiene at all contacts and in particular between six months to one year. This provides the opportunity to encourage moving from the use of a feeding bottle to a beaker, reducing the risk of dental carries and potential speech and language problems.

It is hoped in the future to promote the programme with the registered childminders within the Flying Start service.