

20 October 2009

## Press Release

**Media Opportunity: Reporters and photographers are welcome to attend the Smile Sack launch event at St John the Baptist Primary School, St John's Way, Ragworth, Stockton, on Thursday October 22 at 10.30am. Photo/video opportunities will include pupils performing the Brushing Song. To confirm your attendance or arrange interviews please contact Press Officer Marie Levy on 01642 352623.**

### **Kids given plenty to smile about**

Children are being encouraged to look after their teeth from an early age thanks to a fun new scheme.

Nurseries across Teesside are being given Smile Sacks packed full of educational games to help three to five-year-olds learn more about healthy eating and tooth brushing.

The Smile Sack contains counter-based games, Snacks the Snake, a puppet, four take-home Smile Sack games bags, wall charts and a CD featuring a brushing song composed by pupils from Bydales Specialist Technology College in Marske.

Each game contains key messages including that it is best to limit sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes and that drinking plain milk and water is good for teeth.

Youngsters will also be taught that brushing teeth twice a day and using a pea-sized amount of family strength fluoride toothpaste is the best way to maintain a healthy smile. Regular visits to the dentist are also recommended.

It is hoped that the Smile Sack games will encourage parents to reinforce the oral health messages at home.

The scheme, which is being launched at St John the Baptist Primary School in Stockton on Thursday (OCTOBER 22), forms part of the Smile4Life project - a partnership between Primary Care Trusts on Teesside, Oral Health Promotion and Learning Days Ltd - and complements the daily tooth brushing programmes already running in targeted schools.

Kamini Shah, Consultant in Dental Public Health for NHS Tees said: "Research shows children who start brushing their teeth from the time their first tooth appears have lower rates of decay than children who start brushing their teeth later.

Issued by the Communications and Marketing Team for the four Primary Care Trusts on Teesside.

For information, photographs and interviews, please contact **Marie Levy**, Press Officer on **01642 352623** or by e-mail: [marie.levy@middlesbroughpct.nhs.uk](mailto:marie.levy@middlesbroughpct.nhs.uk)

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“Helping children learn about good dental health through play will help make it fun to visit the dentist.”

Helen Malbon Acting Headteacher from St John’s Primary School said they were looking forward to using the latest educational games to build on the work they have already done: “Our children have loved taking part in the Oral Health Teeth brushing initiative and thoroughly enjoy brushing their teeth at school.”

**ENDS**

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