

Improving Oral Health Literacy: Teaching Primary School Students through the Lessons in a Lunch Box Program



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CE Credits: 1 hours

Intended Audience: Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Assistants, Dental Students, Dental Hygiene Students, Dental Assistant Students

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Cost: Free

Method: Self-instructional

AGD Subject Code(s): 770

Online Course: www.dentalcare.com/en-us/professional-education/ce-courses/ce456

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

- The authors report no conflicts of interest associated with this course.

Introduction

This continuing education (CE) course exemplifies oral health literacy education. It was developed to offer dental health professionals an innovative way to improve oral health literacy by going directly into second and third grade classrooms. Today, this direct delivery of the program could include a virtual *Lessons in a Lunch Box* presentation. This CE lecture introduces unique strategies to address health literacy utilizing a lunch box designed with stimulating educational content focusing on wellbeing behaviors, and dental careers guidance. Additionally, the lunch box contains oral hygiene products packaged in a charming travel case.

Please Note:

1. Registration is required to present a *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program. [Click here](#) to register and view registration dates. Supplies are limited.
2. For School Superintendents, School Principals, K-12 Teachers, and K-12 Learning Facilitators, this course is for informational purposes only and does not offer CE credit.

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Overview

This course introduces a unique strategy to address health literacy. The core purpose of this training lecture is to thoroughly educate dental professionals about the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program primarily by teaching them the stepwise approach to efficiently present these materials to their elementary school audiences, second and third grade students. This course will equip professionals with information and resources necessary to offer the oral and diet health education presentation in community schools. A “dentally designed” lunch box and a dental hygiene products container, crafted in the likeness of a fresh carrot are both used to, (1) aid in presenting the program by captivating and exciting young audiences, (2) teach about food choices, meal planning and portion size, (3) provide flossing and brushing instructions, (4) educate about careers throughout the dental profession, and (5) make sure the meaningful lessons being taught are remembered long after the one hour presentation.

The course is designed to empower children and their families with proper knowledge about routine dental health maintenance, oral disease prevention, good dietary choices, and careers in dentistry by training student and practicing dentists, student and practicing dental hygienists, other health professional

volunteers and educators to deliver the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program.

All health professionals are required to complete this CE course assignment, and all volunteers are encouraged to do so prior to participating in the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program at a registered elementary school.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the dental professional should be able to:

- Understand the importance of oral health literacy.
- Understand the consequences of limited oral health literacy.
- Understand the oral health literacy framework.
- Understand the benefits of improving oral health literacy.
- Increase self-efficacy to improve oral health literacy via an educational system program.
- Learn methods to achieve oral health literacy in children.

Introduction

The lessons taught through the *Lessons in a Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks* program focus on disease prevention. The lunch box illustrates flossing and brushing in English and Spanish. It displays the USDA nutritional food plate (*MyPlate*) diagram and link to ChooseMyPlate.gov for children and their families to easily access information about nutritious meal choices.



Children in grades 2 and 3 are encouraged to consider careers in dentistry. This career information is provided by the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), Explore Health Careers and Dental Student Outreach Program.

There is a child-friendly image of two young children playing dentist and a reflective sticker at the opening which reads, "See yourself becoming a dentist, a dental hygienist, a dental assistant or a dental technician."

The lunch box provides children with their very own dental carrot case (*Dental Care in a Carrot*) to keep all of their oral hygiene essentials together. The carrot case is designed to store a toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss. The screw-on carrot case top doubles as a rinse cup. The steps to proper flossing and brushing are printed on the inside along with a polyester mirror. *Dental Care in a Carrot* is both printed and spelled out in braille on this travel case.

In Part 1 of this course oral health literacy is discussed, and Part 2 of the course goes through the steps in detail that are important to present in the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program. Historical data is provided on the research that has been done confirming the need to improve the quality of lives through innovative oral health educational programs and strategies.

Part I: Introduction to Oral Health Literacy



[Click on image to view video online.](#)

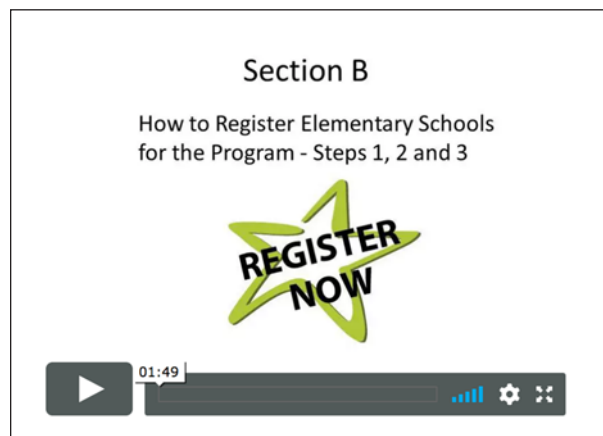
Part II: Implementing the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* Program

Section A: How to Present the Program (Steps 1 - 12)



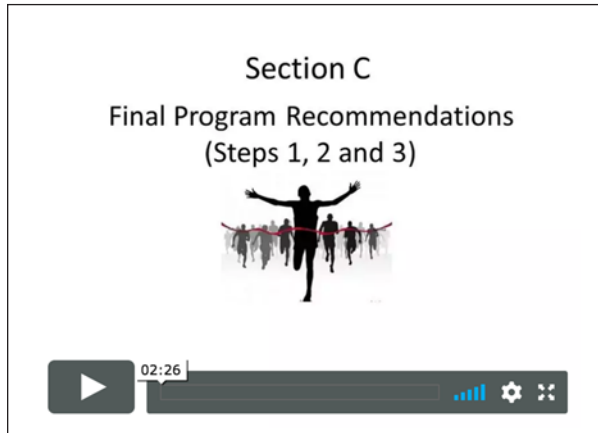
[Click on image to view video online.](#)

Section B: How to Register Elementary Schools for the Program (Steps 1 - 3)



[Click on image to view video online.](#)

Section C: Final Program Recommendations (Steps 1 – 3)



[Click on image to view video online.](#)

Conclusion

The *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program is health literacy in action. Health education is achieved through participation and interaction which leads to health literacy, and this is what happens when you take the time to present this innovative program. The lessons taught focus on disease prevention, wellness and how to avoid the two dietary diseases which too often plague children attending Title 1 schools – tooth decay and obesity.

The Children’s Oral Health Institute is excited that you will present *Lessons in a Lunch Box* at a

local Title 1 elementary school. Your continued commitment and dedication to the oral health education of children and their families is invaluable to these communities, to the profession of dental medicine and to the oral health literacy of our country. This program will help the oral health professional to appreciate that the lunch box/carrot case ensemble offers many children an important “sanctuary” for their personal dental hygiene products.

As we continue to incorporate oral health literacy into the daily practice of dental medicine, health professionals should become well versed to ensure this messaging is communicated accurately and effectively.

Appendix A: Lessons in a Lunch Box Presented in American Sign Language



[Click on image to view video online.](#)

Course Test Preview

To receive Continuing Education credit for this course, you must complete the online test. Please go to: www.dentalcare.com/en-us/professional-education/ce-courses/ce456/test

- 1. Which is NOT a component of the definition of oral health literacy?**
 - A. capacity of individuals to obtain, process, and understand basic oral health information and services
 - B. using health information to make appropriate health decisions
 - C. using health information to formulate research articles
 - D. action on those health decisions

- 2. Which is a potential consequence of limited oral health literacy?**
 - A. more dental related morbidity
 - B. increased dental care costs
 - C. less knowledgeable of oral health information
 - D. All of the above.

- 3. Which is NOT an example of a benefit of improved oral health literacy?**
 - A. increased caries
 - B. increased frequency of brushing
 - C. less knowledgeable of oral health information
 - D. All of the above.

- 4. The more healthy literate people are, the less they seek care.**
 - A. True
 - B. False

- 5. Who can implement oral health literacy programs?**
 - A. dentists
 - B. dental hygienists
 - C. dental assistants
 - D. All of the above.

- 6. Which are components of the IOM's Oral Health Literacy Framework?**
 - A. culture and society
 - B. education system
 - C. interaction that individuals have with the health system
 - D. All of the above.

- 7. Which of the following is a great way to improve oral health literacy using educational systems (according to the IOM's) Oral Health Literacy Framework?**
 - A. television commercial
 - B. educational brochure for parent
 - C. the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program
 - D. None of the above.

- 8. The *Lessons in a Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks* program is?**
 - A. a free lunch program
 - B. an oral health literacy program
 - C. an after school program
 - D. free toys at elementary schools

9. **The *Lessons in a Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks* program is designed to empower children and their families with the knowledge about?**
- A. careers in dentistry
 - B. good dietary choices
 - C. oral disease prevention
 - D. All of the above.
10. **The purpose of this course is to educate dental professionals about the program and teach them how to present the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* materials to the elementary school audience.**
- A. True
 - B. False
11. **The program is for dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants and dental professional students to present the program to children in the 2nd and 3rd grades.**
- A. True
 - B. False
12. **By providing individuals with the necessary skills to obtain, understand, and act on dental-related information the following may be true.**
- A. increased ability to cope with the demands of oral health maintenance
 - B. improved oral health outcomes
 - C. Both A and B are correct.
 - D. Neither A nor B are correct.
13. **The dentally designed lunch box illustrates?**
- A. flossing and brushing on the inside panels in both English and Spanish
 - B. USDA nutritional food plate (MyPlate) diagram displayed on the opposite inside label
 - C. Both A and B are correct.
 - D. Neither A nor B are correct.
14. **USDA's "MyPlate" reminds children that it is important to eat healthy foods and to avoid too many in-between-meal snacks and sweet treats. MyPlate is?**
- A. a porcelain plate
 - B. important information about portion control
 - C. a wonderful tool to help families eat healthier
 - D. B and C are correct
15. **Children in grades 2 and 3 are encouraged to consider careers in dentistry using the label located on the outside left of the lunch box which includes information provided by?**
- A. American Dental Education Association (ADEA)
 - B. Explore Health Careers
 - C. dental student outreach programs
 - D. All of the above.
16. **A reflective sticker in the shape of a smile is located at the opening of the lunch box that reads, "See yourself becoming a dentist, a dental hygienist, a dental assistant or a dental technician."**
- A. True
 - B. False

17. **The lunch box provides children with their very own “carrot case” to keep all of the dental hygiene essentials together. The carrot case is designed to store a toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss. The screw-on carrot case top double as a rinse cup.**
A. True
B. False
18. **Presenters should arrive at the elementary school where they will present the *Lesson in a Lunch Box* program?**
A. at least 45 minutes before the program is to be presented
B. 90 minutes before the program is to be presented
C. 15 minutes before the program is to be presented
D. None of the above are correct.
19. **A table display should be organized and set up in front of the room prior to the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program presentation including?**
A. one case of lunch boxes (24)
B. demonstration toothbrush and mouth models
C. demonstration floss and nutrition exhibits
D. All of the above.
E. No table display is recommended.
20. **The cafeteria is the best of all places in the school to present the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program because this is the environment where lunch is eaten. The children can have their lunch boxes on the cafeteria table in front of them instead of being on their lap’s in the auditorium or on the floors in the gymnasium.**
A. True
B. False
21. **The flossing and brushing videos, *It’s Dental Flossophy*, *Charlie Brown* and *Tooth Brushing with Charlie Brown* have been used many times during *Lessons in a Lunch Box* presentations.**
A. True
B. False
22. **Teachers should be made aware of the name label on the lunch box. They should be reminded to have fine tip, permanent markers available so that the child’s name can be written on the lunch box. This name label is located on the right side of the lunch box and is in the shape of?**
A. a tube of toothpaste
B. a toothbrush
C. an apple
D. a smile
23. **The registration form for the *Lessons in a Lunch Box* program can be downloaded from the Children’s Oral Health Institute website.**
A. True
B. False

24. *Lessons in a Lunch Box* is a free program, however, there is a cost to have the lunch boxes shipped to the elementary school you have selected. Arrangements to pay the shipping cost using United Parcel Service (UPS), Federal Express (FedEx), or Deutsche Post (DHL) account numbers is the preferred method of payment.
- A. True
 - B. False

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Additional Resources

- [It's Dental Flossophy, Charlie Brown](#). Accessed April 20, 2021.
- [Tooth Brushing with Charlie Brown](#). Accessed April 20, 2021.
- [Dudley the Dinosaur – Brush Your Teeth, Smiles Dentistry for Kids](#). Accessed April 20, 2021.
- [Geena's Tremendous Tooth Adventure. dentalcare.com](#). Accessed April 20, 2021.
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- [Dental Care in a Carrot Case. Lessons in a Lunch Box. The Children's Oral Health Institute](#). Accessed April 20, 2021.
- [The Children's Oral Health Institute](#). Accessed April 20, 2021.
- [Code Red: The Oral Health Crisis In Your Classroom©. The Children's Oral Health Institute](#). Accessed April 20, 2021.

About the Authors

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Dr. Winifred J. Booker is the CEO & Director of Development for The Children's Oral Health Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to oral health promotion and disease prevention education. She earned her certificate in pediatric dentistry from the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC and currently practices in Owings Mills, Maryland. She received her doctorate in dental surgery from Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry and bachelors in biology from Tennessee State University. She is the Past President of the Maryland Dental Society and a past treasurer for the Society of American Indian Dentists. She is a current Member of the House of Delegates for the National Dental Association and the Maryland State Dental Association and serves as a media spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

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