

CONNECTIONS

Early Learning Program

Eau Claire 4 Tomorrow, Head Start, & Special Education
Linking Home and School for Success



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Sweetened Beverages: Rethink Your Drink

DRINKING SWEETENED BEVERAGES DAMAGE YOUR TEETH

[Rethink Your Drink | Healthy Weight, Nutrition, and Physical Activity | CDC](#)

- Tooth decay is caused by bacteria in the mouth combines with sugar from foods and drinks to produce acids that dissolve and damage teeth.
- Sugar sweetened beverages can significantly contribute to tooth decay.
- Regular and 'diet' soft drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit juices, and fruit drinks have high acid levels that can cause tooth erosion.
- Tooth erosion occurs when acid attacks teeth & dissolves the outer surface of tooth enamel.
- Regular loss of enamel can lead to cavities and cause the inner layers of teeth to be exposed.
- Prevention of enamel loss is very important for the long term health of your teeth.

HOW TO FIGHT TOOTH DECAY AND EROSION

- Drink soft drinks only in moderation, if at all. Drink water instead.
- Use a straw so your teeth are less exposed to the sugar & acid in the drink.
- Take a drink of water after a sugary/acidic drink to help rinse your mouth and dilute the sugars.
- Protect your teeth by using fluoride toothpaste. Also, after drinking sugary or acidic beverages, don't brush your teeth right away. Wait at least one hour so your teeth can recover and the enamel can re-harden before your brush them.
- Do not sip sugary or acidic drinks slowly or over a long duration. Doing so exposes your teeth to sugar and acid attacks for longer.
- Never drink sugary or acidic drinks before you to bed—if you do so, the liquid will pool in your mouth, coating your teeth with sugar and acid.



27g
7 tsp



41g
10 tsp



42g
10 1/2 tsp



32g
8 tsp



62g
15 1/2 tsp

4 grams = 1 teaspoon of sugar

ECASD EARLY LEARNING



Yog Koj Xav Tau
 Daim Ntawv No
 Txhais Ua Lus
 Hmoob, Hu Tuaj Rau
 715-852-3555

Si desea que alguien
 le traduzca esta car-
 ta o si tiene pregun-
 tas,
 (715) 852-3614

Contact Information

Prairie Ridge Early Learning School
 3031 Epiphany Lane, Eau Claire, WI 54703
 Main Phone Number & Attendance Line 715-852-3600



Name	Position	Email	Phone
Michael Johnson	Eau Claire Area School District Superintendent	mjohnson@ecasd.us	715-852-3006
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April Krall	Special Education Program Support	akrall@ecasd.us	715-852-3628
Student Transit	715-839-5116	ECASD Central Office	715-852-3000

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!! [ECASD | Home](#) Click on Schools; Click on Early Learning

If you would like someone to help you with this newsletter for you or if you have questions, **call Jill Italiano at (715) 852-3607.**

Lus Hmoob * Yog koj xav tau tus neeg Hmoob txhais daim ntawv no ua lus Hmoob rau koj los yog koj muaj lus nug txog daim ntawv no, **hu rau Blia Schwahn (715) 852-6850.**

En Espanol * Si desea que alguien le traduzca esta carta o si tiene preguntas, **llame a Anna Grosman al (715) 852-3614.**

Note from Principal Laurie Haus

Dear Families,

Our February character focus is on perseverance. Perseverance is pushing yourself to work through challenges and obstacles. Staff are working with your children to develop this character trait. Using these words at home in an encouraging way can help support this growth in your child. Thank you for your partnership!

During the week of February 12-15, all classrooms are participating in Kindness Week. We work on building kindness skills all year long, but it will be special to celebrate together! The dress up days are optional.

February 12-15 Kindness Week Dress Up Days:

Monday 2/12: Team Up with Kindness: Wear your favorite team shirt/ jersey or team colors.

Tuesday 2/13: Shine Bright with Kindness: Wear bright colors.

Wednesday 2/14: Peace, Love, & Kindness Day: Wear tie dye, hearts, or peace signs.

Thursday 2/15: Hats Off to Kindness: Crazy hair or hat day.

Wishing you well,

Laurie Haus

Early Learning Principal



Family Events

UPCOMING EVENTS & HAPPENINGS IN FEBRUARY

- **February 9th ~ Play Group**
- **February 12th ~ Triple P & Parent Meeting**
- **February 17th ~ Mommy and Me “Tea Party”**
- **February 20th ~ Debunking the Myth of Stranger Danger and Internet Safety**



ECASD Early Learning offers many ways for families to get involved. Family events are **FREE** and open to any preschool age children and their families, unless specified. If ECASD schools are closed due to the weather, event is cancelled.

Register for any of the events online at this link:

[Click Here](#)





Play N' Learn Play Group

Friday,
February 9th, 2024
9:30-11:00 am

Future Play N' Learns

March 15th

April 26th

May 10th

Location:

Prairie Ridge EL School



Prairie Ridge Early
Learning School
3031 Epiphany Lane
Eau Claire, WI 54703

All are welcome! Join this fun, free, and interactive play group for pre-school aged children. You and your child will experience story time, hands on activities, and lots of learning through play! Snack will be provided.

WAYS TO REGISTER:

CALL 715-852-3677

**EMAIL
KHOLLIDAY@ECASD.US**

**SCAN QR CODE TO
REGISTER ON-LINE**

**REGISTER BY CLICKING
[Click Here](#)**



ECASD EARLY LEARNING



EAU CLAIRE 4 TOMORROW



HEAD START

ECASD Early Learning & Head Start

Parent

MEETING



Connect with Other Families and Learn How to Support Your Child's Growth! As parents, we all want the best for our children. Free dinner and child care provided.

Training Topic: Triple P "Raising Confident, Competent Children"

5:00-5:30 Dinner & Parent Meeting

5:30-7:00 Triple P Presentation

Located at Prairie Ridge; 3031 Epiphany Lane

FEBRUARY

12

**REGISTER
TODAY!**



Ways to Register:
Call 715-852-3630
jitaliano@ecasd.us



[Click Here](#)



You are Cordially Invited to a

Mommy & Me Royal-tea Party!

Date: Saturday February 17, 2024

Time: 9:30am - 11:30am



Place: Moose Lodge

3606 Curvue Road Eau Claire, WI



RSVP: Kellie Holliday

715-852-3677 or kholliday@ecasd.us or [Click Here](#)

*Royal activities: Ballroom dancing, flower craft,
story time with tea and crumpets.*



*Mommy and Me is open to all preschool age children along
with moms, guardians, grandmothers, aunts, etc., or any
positive role model in the child's life.*

SPONSORED BY THE EAU CLAIRE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF STRANGER DANGER

We all want kids to be aware of their surroundings, to be able to identify which adults are safe and trustworthy adults, and to understand boundaries. One of the best ways we can prevent abuse is to educate, inform, and share the key knowledge that everybody should know- even with our kids.



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 2024

**5:00-7:00 PM @ PRAIRIE RIDGE
3031 EPIPHANY LANE**

JOIN THIS FREE INFORMATIVE SESSION LED BY SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER, MORGAN DEERING & SCHOOL COUNSELOR, AMANDA BENNETT ON KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN SAFE. INFORMATION COVERED WILL ALSO INCLUDE INTERNET SAFETY.

DINNER & CHILDCARE PROVIDED.

**REGISTER TODAY!
JITALIANO@ECASD.US
715-852-3607**

[Click Here](#)



District News

Open Enrollment is February 5 through April 30, 2024

What is Public School Open Enrollment? Wisconsin's inter-district public school open enrollment program allows students and families who don't live in our district to open enroll into the Eau Claire Area School District.

Who May Participate? Wisconsin residents in grades K-12 may apply to participate in open enrollment. Students in pre-kindergarten may participate in limited circumstances; parents should call the Executive Director of Business Services at 715-852-3010 to find out if their preschool-aged children qualify.

How and When May Parents Apply? The regular open enrollment application window will be February 5, 2024, through April 30, 2024, for the 2024-2025 school year. Parents may submit online applications beginning February 5, 2024, at the Wisconsin Department of Instruction website at <https://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>. Please call 715-852-3127 or email districtadministration@ecasd.us for more information.

Have you moved out of the district during the 2023-2024 school year? If so, you must apply for a Tuition Waiver to continue attending the Eau Claire Area School District for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year. Contact the Enrollment Office at 715-852-3127 or email districtadministration@ecasd.us for an application.

Students Currently Attending the ECASD Through a Tuition Waiver: Students who have moved outside of the district during the 2023-2024 school year and are currently attending school under a Tuition Waiver must apply for open enrollment during the regular application window, February 5, 2024, through April 30, 2024, to continue attending during the 2024-2025 school year.

Current Open Enrollment Students: Students currently attending the Eau Claire Area School District under the open enrollment law do not need to reapply.

Other Information: Students who move into the district after January 2024 and anticipate moving out of the district before the 2024-2025 school year will not be eligible for a Tuition Waiver. Students must apply for open enrollment during either the regular open enrollment or alternative open enrollment period to be eligible to attend the Eau Claire Area School District during the 2024-2025 school year.

School Placement: By completing an open enrollment application, you are applying to attend the Eau Claire Area School District. You have the opportunity to indicate which school your child would prefer to attend; however, the district will determine placement based on space availability.

Questions? If you have any questions about open enrollment or the application process, please contact the Enrollment Office at 715-852-3127 or email districtadministration@ecasd.us.

2024-2025 School Year Calendar Approved by School Board

Our School Board approved the 2024-2025 School Year Calendar at the January 22, 2024, School Board meeting. Please go to [2024-2025 School Year Calendar \(pdf\)](#) for details.



District News



Do you have children ages 3 or 4?

The Eau Claire Area School District (ECASD) Early Learning Program will begin accepting online applications for incoming 3 and 4 year old students for the 2024-25 school year on February 1st, 2024. The ECASD Early Learning Program includes our Eau Claire 4 Tomorrow (EC4T/4K) and Head Start program, as well as Western Dairyland Head Start. For additional information, visit our website at: www.ecasd.us, Click Schools, Click on ECASD Early Learning Program.

If your child turns 3 on or before September 1, 2024

Applications for Head Start will be accepted.

Please note: there are limited spots and income/eligibility guidelines apply. Please apply online.

****If you are applying for Head Start....***

Once your application is received, you will be contacted to complete the enrollment process and verify your income/eligibility.

If your child turns 4 on or before September 1, 2024

Applications for EC4T(4K) and/or Head Start will be accepted. Please enroll your child online.

****If you are applying for EC4T(4K) and/or Head Start...***

Once your application has been received, you will be contacted via letter or phone call confirming receipt of the application & determine if your family also qualifies for Head Start.

Any questions, contact the Eau Claire Area School District Early Learning Office

715-852-3600

Apply online at www.ecasd.us/enrollment

Click the [blue](#) 'Early Learning Program' icon, then click the [blue](#) 'Click Here to Enroll' icon.

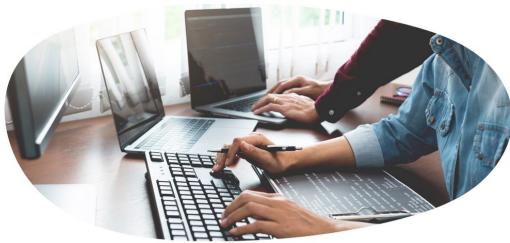


District News



FAMILIES - JOIN US FOR

FAMILY SERVICES AFTER HOURS



- ★ Wisconsin Educational Opportunities Representative available to:

- Help with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Provide information on WI TIP and Gear Up Grants - available to ALL students

- ★ Information about Youth Substance Misuse:

- Stop by the Eau Claire City-County Health Department resource table to learn more about new and emerging cannabis products sold in Wisconsin, e-cigarettes and vaping, youth substance misuse in Eau Claire County, youth resources, and more!

- ★ Representatives from CVTC and UWEC:

- Stop by their resource tables to chat and get information

- ★ SKYWARD Assistance

- ★ SNACKS

**MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 5**

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

**ECASD Administration
Building
500 Main St.**




Yog koj xav tau tus neeg txhais daim ntawv no ua lus Hmoob rau koj los yog koj muaj lus nug txog daim ntawv no, hu rau Blia ntawm (715) 852-6850

Family Information-Mental Health

News from our School Based Mental Health Coordinator

Everyone feels stressed from time to time, but what is stress? How does it affect your overall health? And what can you do to manage your stress? Stress is how the brain and body respond to any demand. Any type of challenge—such as performance at work or school, a significant life change, or a traumatic event—can be stressful. Stress can affect your health. It is important to pay attention to how you deal with minor and major stressors, so you know when to seek help.

 [Here are five things you should know about stress.](#)

 [Stress Catcher Activity](#)

Winter Blues

It's not uncommon to feel down or unmotivated in the winter. Decreased social activities, time outdoors, and sunlight exposure can affect mental health. While feeling down can be normal, sometimes it can turn into something more serious.

Watch for symptoms such as:

- Feeling sad or down most of the time
- Losing interest in activities once enjoyed
- Having low energy or difficulty concentrating
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns



If you or someone you know are experiencing any of these symptoms, help is available.

Call or text the 988 Lifeline for support 24/7 or go to [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).

This information is provided by The Alliance for Substance Misuse Prevention coalition, which works to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug misuse. For more information or to sign up for the Alliance's Parent/Guardian Newsletter, visit

www.GetInvolvedAsap.org



Navigating Mental Health Services in the Chippewa Valley

Getting access to mental health services can be challenging and confusing to do on your own.

The “[Navigating Mental Health Services](#)” packet makes it easier to find help. The packet includes phone numbers for local services, commonly asked questions, & a mental health wellness check tool.

This information is provided by The Alliance for Substance Misuse Prevention coalition, which works to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug misuse. For more information or to sign up for the Alliance's Parent/Guardian Newsletter, visit

www.getinvolvedasap.org

Family Information—Mental Health

February is International Boost Self-Esteem Month

[International Boost Self-Esteem Month Resource Guide \(counselingschools.com\)](http://counselingschools.com)

It's common to struggle with self-esteem at some point in our lives. However, turning our thoughts around and thinking positively about ourselves has significant benefits. This month, join us in boosting self-esteem by following these tips:

1. **Avoid negative self-talk.** When you spend your days thinking about everything you have done wrong or everything you have failed to do, those thoughts become a part of your internal narrative. They influence your level of self-esteem and the more it continues, the worse you feel. When you catch yourself mulling over every flaw, pause, recognize what you're doing, and work to let it go. Reframe your internal conversation by thinking about a strength.
2. **Stop comparing yourself to others.** Former President Theodore Roosevelt said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." The achievement of someone else don't take away from your own. Instead of letting comparison make you feel bad about yourself, take a step back and reflect on how far you have come.
3. **Exercise.** When you exercise, your body releases endorphins. These chemicals trigger a positive feeling. Something as simple as taking a short walk each day can improve your mood.
4. **Celebrate your strengths.** Take a few minutes each day to think about something you did that you liked. This can be anything from a joke you told to friends, to a meal you helped provide for loved ones, or a skill that helped a client or colleague. Not only will this improve your current mood, but looking back on your thoughts can help improve your self-esteem in the long run.

Growing Your Kid's

SELF ESTEEM

What's the **BIG DEAL** anyways?

Kids with high, positive self-esteem usually.....

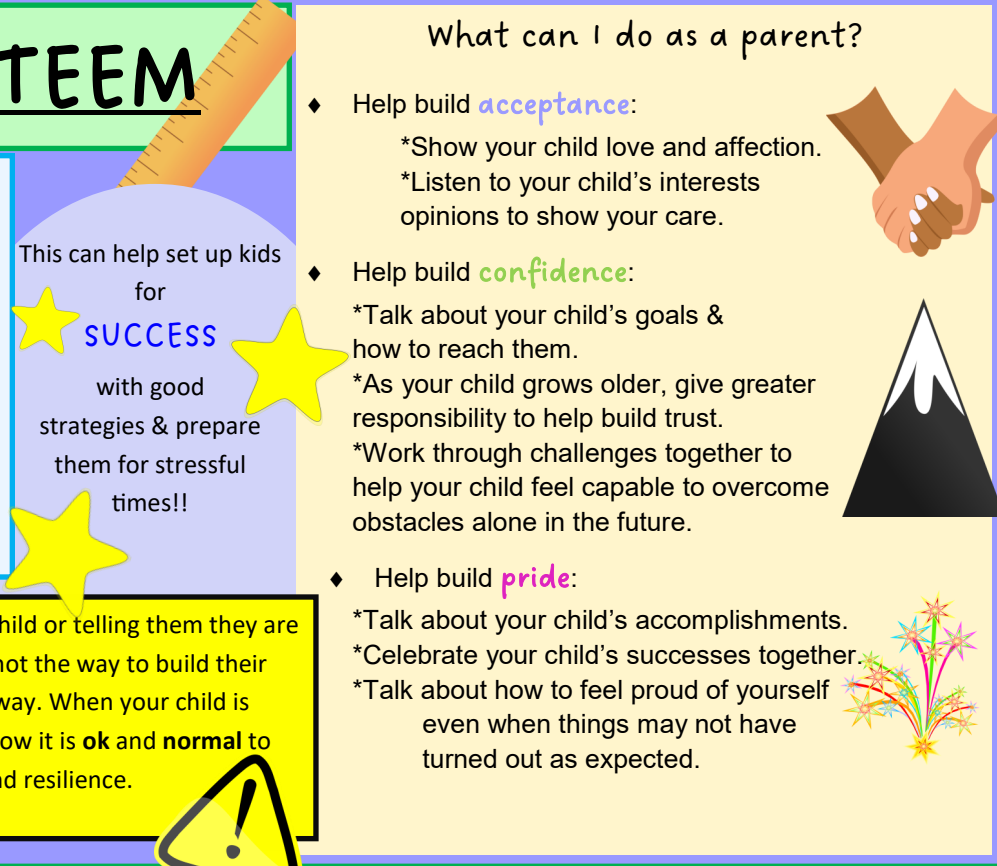
- Feel happy & Believe in themselves
- Feel ready to take on challenges
- Have healthy friendships
- Feel strong in their values and choices
- Are willing to try new activities

This can help set up kids for **SUCCESS** with good strategies & prepare them for stressful times!!

What can I do as a parent?

- ◆ Help build **acceptance**:
 - *Show your child love and affection.
 - *Listen to your child's interests opinions to show your care.
- ◆ Help build **confidence**:
 - *Talk about your child's goals & how to reach them.
 - *As your child grows older, give greater responsibility to help build trust.
 - *Work through challenges together to help your child feel capable to overcome obstacles alone in the future.
- ◆ Help build **pride**:
 - *Talk about your child's accomplishments.
 - *Celebrate your child's successes together.
 - *Talk about how to feel proud of yourself even when things may not have turned out as expected.

Heads Up: Constantly praising your child or telling them they are perfect regardless of their actions is not the way to build their self esteem. Use praise in a genuine way. When your child is experiencing challenges, talk about how it is **ok** and **normal** to fail. This can help build confidence and resilience.



Family Information-Health

Making the Connection: Tobacco, Alcohol, and Cancer



February is National Cancer Prevention Month. Take this time to prevent cancer by learning how to talk to your children about the dangers of tobacco and alcohol. You don't have to be an expert. Just let your kids know how you feel and make sure they have the facts they need to make healthy decisions on their own.

The long-term effects of e-cigarettes are still unknown. However, they still pose health risks.	Alcohol can increase the risk of at least seven types of cancer.
Vaping can expose one to cancer-causing chemicals and metals that are toxic to lungs.	The more a person drinks over their lifetime, the higher their risk for cancer.
Tobacco products cause almost 9 of every 10 cases of lung cancer.	Around 20,000 cancer deaths in the U.S. each year attributed to alcohol use.

Go to www.tobaccoischanging.org and www.smalltalkswi.org for more information.

This information is provided by The Alliance for Substance Misuse Prevention coalition, which works to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug misuse. For more information visit www.getinvolvedasap.org



RESPIRATORY SEASON!

It's that time of the year again...

We've been seeing multiple absences due to respiratory illness. To keep your child healthy, follow the tips below!

Symptoms:

- Cough
- Body aches
- Fever
- Sore throat

When to seek medical attention:

- Fast or difficult breathing
- Fevers over 104 F or that lasts more than 2 days
- Experiencing chest pain
- Symptoms that last more than 3 weeks

How to prevent getting sick:

- Wash hands well and often for at least 20 seconds
- Stay home if sick and get tested as appropriate
- Stay up to date on Flu and COVID vaccines



Family Information-Nutrition & Oral Health



Eat Healthy

Be Active

Your kids are watching

February

Here are some tips to get kids interested in trying new fruits and vegetables!

Make Every Bite Count

At the table...

- Do not force your children to eat
- Offer new fruits and vegetables first, when they are hungry
- Encourage your kids to feed themselves
- Keep conversations positive



At the grocery store...

- Have fun!
- Ask your kids to pick out a few fruits and vegetables to try
- While at the store, ask the produce manager to tell you about the produce in season

In a dish...

- Add vegetables to your favorite foods
- Include fruit as the dessert
- Add vegetables to pasta, soups, tacos, sandwiches, and stir-frys



In a beverage...

- Smoothies are a fun way to get nutrients from dairy and fruit groups
- Blend frozen fruit, 100% fruit juice, and low fat or fat free yogurt
- Experiment with different fruit and yogurt flavors

Outdoors...

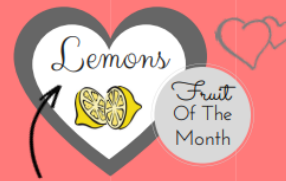
Children love to grow their own food, whether it's in a garden or pot. Help your kids:

- Plant vegetables
- Pick vegetables
- Wash vegetables

In a shape...

- Children enjoy foods in fun shapes. Get creative and have some fun!
- Arrange fruits in a smiley face
- Arrange fruits and vegetables to create different animals or create your own animal

To find out if your family is eligible for WIC, visit: wic.ehealthdepartment.org or call 715-839-5051



With lemons being in season, try making your own lemon water that your kids are sure to love!

Make Every Sip Count

Instead of purchasing expensive flavored waters in the grocery store, you can easily make your own at home. Try adding any of the following to a cold glass or pitcher of water:

- Sliced citrus fruits or zest (lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit)
- Crushed fresh mint
- Peeled, sliced fresh cucumber
- Crushed berries

Make Every Bite Count

Chicken Vegetable Soup with Kale

You'll need:

- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup onion (chopped)
- 1/2 cup carrot (chopped)
- 1 teaspoon thyme (ground)
- 2 garlic clove (minced)
- 2 cups water (or chicken broth)
- 3/4 cup tomatoes (diced)
- 1 cup chicken, cooked, skinned and cubed
- 1/2 cup brown rice, cooked (or white rice)
- 1 cup kale (chopped, about one large leaf)

Directions:

- 1) Heat oil in a medium sauce pan. Add onion and carrot. Saute until vegetables are tender, about 5-8 minutes.
- 2) Add thyme and garlic. Saute for one more minute.
- 3) Add water or broth, tomatoes, cooked rice, chicken and kale.
- 4) Simmer for 5-10 minutes.



Eat Healthy, Be Active, Your Kids Are Watching

5 tips for becoming more active as a family

1 Set specific activity times

Determine time slots throughout the week when the whole family is available. Devote a few of these times for physical activity. Try doing something active after dinner or begin the weekend with a Saturday morning walk.

2 Include work around the house

Involve the kids in yard work and other active chores around the house. Have them help you with raking, weeding, planting or vacuuming.

3 Enjoy the weather

Splash in the mud on rainy days when it is not storming, make snowmen in the snow, catch leaves in the air during fall, and climb trees when the weather is warm

4 Turn off the TV

Set a rule that no one can spend more than 2 hours per day playing video games, watching TV, or using the computer. Instead, play an active family game, dance to favorite music, or go for a walk.

5 Treat the family with fun physical activity

When it is time to celebrate with the family, do something active as a reward. Plan a trip to the park or lake!

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local Fit Family project.

ORAL HEALTH



- ✓ First Smile
- ✓ First Tooth
- ✓ First Dental Visit by Age 1

Did you know it's recommended that a child visits the dentist by age one?

WHY? Eau Claire County has seen an increase in the number of children with tooth decay

Part of the Dental Home by Age One campaign by Healthy Communities with support by the Wisconsin Dental Association and Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

How much toothpaste does your child need?



If under age 3, use the size of a "grain of rice"



For age 3 and up, use the size of a "pea"

To help prevent cavities, BRUSH:

- ✓ As soon as teeth appear
- ✓ 2 times a day
- ✓ With fluoride toothpaste