

## Health education group with preschool children: Experience report of nursing students



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### ABSTRACT

The school environment is ideal for developing health education actions, which seek to teach and expand the knowledge of healthier daily practices. Thus, the objective of this report was to describe the experience of nursing students facing an educational action on oral hygiene for preschool children. This is a descriptive experience report produced through the experience with children aged 4 to 5 years from a school in the city of Santo Ângelo. The educational action was carried out by nursing students during the discipline of Collective Health Nursing I in the second semester of 2022. The activity was developed with 24 children of early childhood education on oral health and the importance of tooth brushing with the use of an educational theater and a practice accompanied by tooth brushing. Nurses have an important role in health education, as they propose new methodologies and interventions to face health problems that affect populations. Health education aimed at children allows learning, integration, and stimulation to do the correct brushing of the teeth, preventing future problems.

**Keywords:** Health Education, Oral health, Nursing.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Health education is an important means to expand the knowledge of practices that are related to healthy behaviors on the part of individuals. Given this context, their actions have a persuasive character, as they seek to precept certain behaviors considered pertinent to the prevention or minimization of health problems (GUETERRES *et al.*, 2017). In this scenario, the school environment



is the most conducive to developing health activities since, in the first years of school life, children are vulnerable to various infectious diseases because they are unaware of recommended ways of prevention, including correct hygiene of the hands and mouth structures. (ALMEIDA DE OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2021).

As a policy that is based on the articulation between School and Primary Health Care, in 2007, the School Health Program (PSE) was created, which aims at the integration between health and education for the development of citizenship and the qualification of Brazilian public policies. Health and education policies aimed at children, adolescents, young people, and adults in Brazilian public education come together to promote health and integral education. (BRAZIL, 2007). The PSE aims to contribute to the integral formation of students through actions of promotion, prevention, and health care to face the vulnerabilities that compromise the full development of children and young people in the public school system. (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2018). Among the actions recommended by the PSE, it is worth mentioning the Promotion of Oral Health, given its great importance in the development of a good quality of life, because having a healthy mouth avoids and prevents various diseases such as caries. According to the Ministry of Health, "The caries disease is the most prevalent disease in the world, non-infectious, non-transmissible, sugar-dependent and bio-social character." (BRAZIL, 2018 p. 52).

Inserted in this context of Health Promotion, such as oral health, is the nurse's performance, focused on the action of care, valuing the well-being of the patient and, therefore, assuming great responsibilities when performing educational activities to help the user and the community through health education. According to Pinheiro:

"Health education is inserted in the context of nursing performance as a means for the establishment of a dialogical-reflective relationship between nurse and client, in which the latter seeks to reflect on their health-disease situation and perceives themselves as subjects of transformation of their own lives." (PINE, 2011)

Thus, the importance of nursing as a profession of social commitment, sensitive to problems and human rights, and as a science that proposes new methodologies and interventions is highlighted. In this way, the nurse uses health education as a strategy to cope with the multiple health problems that affect populations and their social contexts (PINHEIRO, 2011); among these problems are those related to oral hygiene, which can be prevented through their actions.

## 2 OBJECTIVE

To report the experience of nursing students during the development of a health education activity on oral hygiene held in a school in the region of Santo Ângelo, Rio Grande do Sul.



### 3 METHODOLOGY

The present work is an experience report on oral hygiene, through the internship of the discipline Collective Health Nursing I of the Nursing course of the Regional Integrated University of Alto Uruguay and the Missions, with the academics: Maria Eduarda Rosa de Lima, Náiali Gonçalves Rodrigues, Leandra Lia Muller, and Thauana Baldessarini of the fourth semester. Second (CAVALCANTE; LIMA, 2012, p.96), an experience report "is a descriptive research tool that presents a reflection on an action or a set of actions that address a situation experienced in the professional sphere of interest to the scientific community."

The health education activity took place on August 11, 2022; the target audience of the activity was 24 children of early childhood education from 4 to 5 years of age, in the preschool of the municipality of Santo Ângelo, with educational activities: theater and the practice of the technique of correct brushing of the teeth.

### 4 DEVELOPMENT

Educational activities for children aged 4 to 5 preschool years were carried out by a group of academics to do health education in charge of addressing the theme of Oral Health and the importance of brushing, in a public school in the municipality of Santo Ângelo, RS, on August 11, 2022.

Venâncio D.R. et al. (2011), back as children in the Pre-Operational phase (2 to 7 years), are more influenced by the visual qualities of the objects, where the most accentuated characteristic is the playful activity, accompanied by inquiry and curiosity. Thus, the participants of the group organized themselves to carry out an educational theater portraying the importance of oral hygiene to draw the attention of children and arouse curiosity and interaction. With this, the construction of a cardboard mouth with recyclable pet bottle teeth was carried out to create an object to explain the correct forms of brushing, facilitating the children's visualization.

During the theater activity, the correct brushing techniques were approached through a model of the Ministry of Health (BRASIL, 2012, p. 9), which takes place through some steps. At first, oral hygiene should be performed daily with fluoride toothpaste, by positioning the brush towards the gums and making movements from top to bottom, on the upper teeth and from the bottom up, on the lower teeth as if you were sweeping them. Then brush the inside of each tooth in the same way and the surfaces of the teeth, with gentle, back-and-forth movements. The brush should reach all teeth, including the last teeth of the back of the mouth. After brushing, one should wrap about 40 cm of floss between the fingers and pass between the gums and the tooth to bring the dirt to the tip of the tooth. It is recommended to floss at least twice in each of the spaces between the teeth. Finally, it is important to brush the tongue, making movements with the brush as if you were sweeping the tongue from the inside to the tip.



Soon after the educational theater, which showed the correct techniques of tooth brushing through the model of the Ministry of Health, the children were able to reproduce the brushing of the teeth in the cardboard mouth, as they learned during the presentation. Then, a collective mouth brushing was performed, guided by the participants of the group, with each child present. From this practice, it was possible to individually help each child to perform oral hygiene techniques, being able to identify the difficulties and doubts of each one to provide a better understanding.

During the performance of the activities, one can observe the enthusiasm of the children, who actively participated in the course of the theater and reproduction of brushing, with comments and doubts, showing interest in the theme and willingness to learn. This is evidence, as the school is one of the main institutions where health is incited, especially when it comes to oral health education, where the priority is the child since this type of education should begin as soon as possible. Thus, it is possible to improve knowledge about oral health in preschoolers by using adequate resources for this age group (AQUILANTE; ALMEIDA; MARTINS; XAVIER; SALES PERES; Bastos, 2003)

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The educational activities carried out in a school environment sought to pass on knowledge and arouse the interest of the preschool public concerning oral health and the importance of hygiene care with the teeth. In addition, the school environment was very conducive to developing educational action, which counted on the collaboration of all, both students and teachers. The children showed interest in the practice and habit of brushing, and many report already adopting such a habit by teaching and encouraging their parents at home.

Thus, the internship group, through the activities developed, aimed to contribute to the community through the propagation of oral health education, encouraging children to adopt hygienic and healthy habits. Thus, it will positively influence their quality of life, considering that this is the role of Nursing through health education.



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