

Terms of Reference: Paediatric Oral Health SIG

Specialist Paediatric Dentists of New Zealand | Kaimātai Niho Tamariki o Aotearoa (SPDNZ)

Proposal

We propose the formation of a new Special Interest Group (SIG), named Paediatric Oral Health SIG.

Background

The SPDNZ is a not-for-profit Charitable Trust formed in 2014, consisting of a group of Specialist Paediatric Dentists in New Zealand committed to actively responding to a range of issues relating to the dental and oral health of tamariki in Aotearoa New Zealand. The group's membership works collaboratively with other associations, societies, government departments and institutions to advance optimal oral health of all tamariki and rangatahi in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ) children, good oral health has become a luxury that most Māori and Pasifika children, and those of low socio-economic status, do not enjoy. By age 5 years, three out of five Māori, seven out of ten Pasifika, and one out of three non-Māori/non-Pasifika children have already experienced dental caries ('tooth decay'), making it the most prevalent non-communicable disease (NCD) in NZ children and worldwide.

The reorientation of the NZ health system under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 provides an opportunity for oral health to be improved, recognising that the oral health of the nation's tamariki is not the sole responsibility of the services charged with providing oral health care; the problem is too far-reaching to be managed without a collaborative and co-ordinated approach across health and society. Paediatric oral health is one of the greatest health inequities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Given the growing oral health inequities, working and educating together will help to combat the oral health issues facing NZ children and youth, particularly given the comorbidity between chronic diseases such as obesity and dental caries. Improving child oral health in NZ will require sustained, streamlined activity across the whole of society, and particularly among services that care for children, in health and beyond.

Purpose

The purpose of the NZ Paediatric Oral Health SIG is to provide kaitiakitanga. We aim to protect the taonga of oral health for our tamariki, rangatahi and the next generation. This will be a platform to enable, educate and network amongst all key stakeholders and

professionals who are involved and interested in children's oral health in the community and hospital across the motu, including but not limited to Specialist Paediatric Dentists, Paediatricians, allied health team, including nurses:

1. **Whanaungatanga:** networking between the two societies and providing a platform to connect the members of SPDNZ and PSNZ
2. **Mohiotanga:** the sharing of information, raising awareness and understanding of oral health of our tamariki and rangatahi. By enabling, empowering, and collaborating amongst SPDNZ and members of the PSNZ with the sharing of information on children's oral health, such as but not limited to oral healthcare policies, guidelines, and the most up-to-date evidence.
3. **Maramatanga:** to improve understanding and relevance of children's oral health. SPDNZ will collaborate and provide continuing professional medico-dental education to members of PSNZ to improve knowledge, awareness, and understanding of Tamariki and rangatahi oral health in their everyday practice.
4. **Mahi tahi:** Work collaboratively with PSNZ to incorporate contemporary and specific child oral health content into paediatric training curriculum and programs, educating and enabling trainees to assess the oral health of children and educate whānau where appropriate. So that when professionals have completed their education, they are aware of dental concerns, enabled to recognise disease, and empowered to refer.

Responsible to

Council of the Paediatric Society of New Zealand (PSNZ).

Membership

The membership of the SIG is open to any PSNZ or SPDNZ member, or **anyone** working health who is actively engaged in community and/or hospital paediatric work.

Networking/meetings

1. A six-monthly hui will be offered initially for PSNZ and SPDNZ members to network, ask questions, and engage in discussions.
2. The SIG will connect as required when opportunities and needs arise.
3. Annual PSNZ and SPDNZ meetings.