



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Getting healthy eating and active play right from the start**

5 March 2015

---

Unhealthy weight in early childhood is determined in part by eating, physical activity and sedentary behaviours learnt at home in the first five years of life. Therefore promoting healthy eating and active behaviours in children is important. By 18 months of age most Australian children are consuming energy-dense foods and drinks daily. These foods are replacing fruit, vegetables, water, milk and other essential foods.

Many parents find the early years of a child's life as busy and often challenging and describe it as a time when they are overwhelmed with information, but really need more practical support in promoting healthy lifestyle behaviours. It has also been documented that parents are keen to meet with other parents to get peer-support, advice and strategies about how to feed and play with their babies and toddlers. First time mother Lauren Joyce said "It has been great being able to learn from the other mums at the Infant group. Having a Dietitian as the facilitator has also been useful, as they have been able to answer questions and often point us in the right direction with nutrition advice."

The Infant program is a six session program delivered to parents and caregivers of young infants over the first 18 months of life. Developed and evaluated by Deakin University, the Infant program aims to promote healthy eating and active behaviours in parents and their children. Emphasis is placed on preparing for the common challenges of establishing healthy eating and activity patterns in the first years of an infant's life, and providing parents with the skills, knowledge and support they need to nurture the development of healthy behaviours in their child.

Locally the Infant program is run in partnership between Healthy Together Mildura (HTM), Mildura Rural City Council Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and the Sunraysia Community Health Services (SCHS) Allied Health Team Dietitians. Since commencing in October 2013, 165 parents have enrolled in the program and there are more than 20 group programs running.

"We are looking forward to celebrating the first complete cycle of the program on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015", says Infant facilitator Danika Carty. "It has been great to be able to see the children develop over the last 18 months and to work with the parents on some of the day to day issues they face. The parents are really good at sharing their strategies and ideas to promote healthy eating and active play".

Sunraysia Community Health Services is keen to support people who are not first time mothers to attend the Infant program from the 6 month session. So if you have a child aged between birth to 18 months and would like to participate in the Infant program please contact Angelina Cua at Sunraysia Community Health Services on 50225444.

**END**



For further information visit: <http://www.infantprogram.org/>

Media enquiries to:

Jane McCracken, A/g Team Leader, Healthy Together Mildura, Ph: (03) 5025 9644

OR

Linda Henderson, Team Leader, Allied Health, Ph: (03) 5022 5444

Film/Photo opportunity: Infant Program Session, 10am-12 noon, Tuesday 10 March 2015. Please contact Adelaide Giddens on 5022 5444 to arrange