Every six months OPAL will introduce a new healthy lifestyle message to your community. The current message is: ‘Water. The original cool drink.’ to promote water as the drink of first choice instead of sweet drinks.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

› Tap water is free and accessible.
› Water and plain milk are the best drinks for children.
› As a school leader you have a strong influence on what children in your care choose to drink; you can lead by example.
› Sweet drinks are an ‘extra’ food as defined by ‘The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating’ and should only be consumed occasionally. Regular consumption of sweet drinks can cause tooth decay and lead to excess weight gain.
› Sweet drinks include soft drinks, fruit drinks, cordial, flavoured mineral waters, sports waters and sports drinks, energy drinks and fruit juice.
› Serving water or plain milk at meal times at school camps and events is a great start.

TOOLS AVAILABLE

› ‘Water. The original cool drink.’ poster.
› ‘Water. The original cool drink.’ leaflet.

To order more contact your OPAL Local Council Team.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

OPAL will succeed through the support of all groups within your community. Here are some ideas on how you could get involved. Contact your OPAL Local Council Team for more ideas and support.

Spreading the message

You could:

› Encourage children to access water throughout the day.
› Include information about the importance of water as the drink of first choice within the school’s food and nutrition curriculum, which is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.
› Provide information to families and caregivers on making water the drink of first choice in a variety of ways including:
  – Newsletters (for examples see www.opal.sa.gov.au)
  – In enrolment information packs, use ‘Water. The original cool drink.’ leaflet.
  – Display the ‘Water. The original cool drink.’ poster and leaflet in areas accessed by parents. These materials will be sent to your school by your OPAL Local Council Team.

Your school’s environment

You could:

› Have fresh, clean tap water available at all times and encourage students to drink water regularly through the day.
› Have students conduct a water facility audit within the school and identify areas for improvement. Make a commitment to improve identified areas.
› Consider installing a filter system if water quality is an issue.
Allow water bottles to be on students' desks in the classroom.

Encourage healthy food and drink choices for children and students in line with the DECS Right Bite strategy. Right Bite aims to ensure that healthy food and drink choices are available in South Australian schools and preschools. Visit www.decs.sa.gov.au/rightbite

Ensure your school canteen and vending machines provide and promote healthy food choices in line with the Right Bite food and drink spectrum.

Consider preferentially pricing water over other drink products.

Consider introducing Crunch & Sip®, a set break to eat fruit or salad vegetables and drink water in the classroom.

Serve only water or milk at meal times during all school activities and events including camps and excursions.

Making it long term
You could:

Review existing healthy eating policies to ensure they reflect the Right Bite strategy.

Consult the Right Bite strategy for assistance if your preschool does not currently have a healthy eating policy, which includes promoting water as the drink of first choice.

Contact your OPAL Local Council Team if your school requires further copies of the Right Bite manual.

Include in your policy healthy eating guidelines for school activities and events including drink availability at special celebrations and fundraisers.

To find out more and be involved visit www.opal.sa.gov.au or call your OPAL Local Council Team:

Marion: Fraser Keegan 8375 6704
Mt Gambier: Deb Agnew 8721 2588
Onkaparinga: Terri Lamoree 8301 7250
Playford: Lisa Atwell 8256 0226
Port Augusta: Camilla Leaver 8641 9104
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What is OPAL?
OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle) is a significant new childhood obesity prevention initiative that has the highest support at every level – from the Mayor and Council, to State and Australian government Ministers.

The initiative aims to improve the eating and activity patterns of children through working with families and the whole community, and thereby increase the proportion of 0-18 year olds with a healthy weight. OPAL will create opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating and ensure sustainable changes to the environment to make healthy choices easier for the community.

OPAL will make a genuine difference to the health of individuals and communities by becoming part of community life.

OPAL by EPODE is a joint program of Australian, State and Local Governments.