‘Water Only Kinders’ Program

Program Aim:
The ‘Water Only Kinders’ Program aims to improve the health of children, families and staff within the Goulburn Valley region through supporting early childhood education services to inform their staff, children, families and community about practices that reduce health risks for children.

Goulburn Valley Water are encouraging facilities to become ‘Water Only’ by:
- Ensuring tap water is available to all members of the service
- Discouraging children, families and staff members from bringing sweet drinks onto facility grounds
- Discouraging children, families and staff members from purchasing sweet drinks through the facility
- Ensuring staff role model the ideal behaviour by not bringing sweet drinks onto facility grounds

Exceptions include:
- Tea and coffee for staff

Purpose:
The availability of sugary drinks at the service sends a message to children that they are suitable everyday drinks. By discouraging them, it conveys a healthy message to children, families and staff, and this message has the potential to affect community attitudes. The purpose of this program is to encourage staff, children and their families to make smart choices about what they drink for the following reasons:

1. Health
   A. Why sugary drinks are ‘sometimes’ drinks?
      - Australians are very high consumers of sugary drinks. These drinks are the largest source of sugar in the Australian diet, with consumption highest in adolescents and children.
      - The consumption of sugary drinks is associated with an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, weight gain and obesity, which can result in numerous health complications.
      - Sugary drinks are associated with tooth decay in children. This is due to the acidity of such drinks, as well as the bacterial fermentation that can occur with the consumption of sugar.
      - Soft drink consumption could increase the risk of reduced bone strength.
   B. Why do students need to stay hydrated?
      - Mild dehydration can cause symptoms that affect a student’s ability to learn, including headaches, tiredness, irritability, and a lack of concentration.

2. Economic
   - Tap water is value for money in comparison to sugary drinks and bottled water.
   - For the same price as a $2 drink from the shop Goulburn Valley Water customers can get approximately 6800 cups of tap water.
3. Environmentally
   • Drinking tap water over packaged drinks is more environmentally friendly.
   • A large amount of energy and water is required for the production of sugary drinks and bottled water and their packaging, transport and refrigeration. It can take up to 3 litres of water to produce 1 litre of bottled water.\(^1\) Energy is also required for the recycling/disposal process of empty packaging.
   • Over 50% of plastic bottles end up as landfill or litter.\(^1\)
   • In landfill, bottles can take up to 1000 years to break down.\(^2\)

Kinder Benefits:

There are multiple benefits for kinders that participate in the ‘Water Only Kinders’ program. These include:
   • The service is provided with a sign to be placed on the fence, informing the community that the facility is ‘Water Only’.
   • A launch event for the unveiling of the sign. This event includes:
     • Activities for children
     • A drink bottles and other giveaways provided to children and staff
     • Media notified
   • Providing the service with a set of cups for morning/afternoon tea
   • Providing the service with a large water cooler on wheels for taking on excursions, using at events and on hot days.
   • Goulburn Valley Water staff on hand to support the service with their campaign, providing information for children, families and staff, and other resources.
   • Recognition for the service for promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle for children and families.

To register for the ‘Water Only Kinders’ program or to seek additional information, contact:
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*Please note: this program is only available for facilities serviced by Goulburn Valley Water

References
1) Choose Tap
2) https://thewaterproject.org/bottled-water/bottled_water_wasteful