



News Release

Tajikeimik | Mi'kmaw Health and Wellness
For Immediate Release

Tui'kn Partnership launches Baby Smiles ~ Weskewikwa'sit mijua'ji'j, a children's book for healthy, happy baby teeth

WAGMATCOOK FIRST NATION, NS, April 17, 2023 - [The Tui'kn Partnership](#), in collaboration with [Tajikeimik](#), are excited to share the *Baby Smiles - Weskewikwa'sit mijua'ji'j* children's book, available to new parents and caregivers on April 20, 2023.

Released during National Oral Health Month, *Baby Smiles - Weskewikwa'sit mijua'ji'j* provides healthy habits to promote baby's healthy teeth.

"Dental education and resources are lacking in our First Nation communities, and there is a lot of historical trauma related to dental experiences," says Sharon (Paul) Rudderham, Director for Health Transformation at Tajikeimik. "We know the importance of dental health and how it impacts overall health."

The book is available in hard copy, and for free, online as a pdf and an audiovisual link at <http://mhwns.ca/babysmiles>. The Read to Me program will also be distributing this resource to new Mi'kmaw parents and caregivers throughout Nova Scotia.

"We hope both children and adults are drawn to the beautiful Mi'kmaw artistry and the story," says Shauna Hachey, Associate Professor, School of Dental Hygiene, Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry. "The information is evidence-based, with simple, helpful tips that can make a huge difference to baby's oral health."

The book is beautifully illustrated by Loretta Gould, with Mi'kmaw translation by Floyd Prosper, Kenny Prosper and Katani Julian, and narration by Anne Marchand.

"It's very important that more resources are developed to support our Mi'kmaq language revitalization," says Floyd Prosper, Dental Therapist in Eskasoni First Nation and FNIHB, Indigenous Services Canada. "We need to develop more resources that speak directly to our families, and support building their parental bonding, knowledge, and skills. We hope this book will be a resource for both fluent and new Mi'kmaq speakers, and their families."

The Baby Smiles book started as a project by the five First Nations communities in Unama'ki through the Tui'kn Partnership and has grown to include all 13 communities across Nova Scotia, through partnership with Tajikeimik. The project was supported by Aboriginal Children's Hurt and Healing (ACHH) Initiative, Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry, Solutions for Kids in Pain, and Read to Me. Funding was provided by the Chronic Disease Prevention and Management: Oral Health Promotion Fund and Indigenous Services Canada.

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*Elukuti'kw wjit Naji-Wlo'tinenew Utanminal.
We are working toward better health for all in our communities.*

Tajikeimik

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Children age 0 to Grade 2, their families, and the media are invited to:

Baby Smiles - Weskewikwa'sit mijua'ji'
Book Launch

Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre at 10785 Highway 105, Wagmatcook
Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 10:00 am

Tui'kn Partnership consists of the five Unama'ki First Nations: Eskasoni, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook and Waycobah. The Partnership is aimed at bringing a new way of thinking about health and the delivery of health services to the five First Nation communities of Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island). Tui'kn means "passage" in the Mi'kmaq language.

Tajikeimik is the new and developing health and wellness organization being created to lead health transformation on behalf of Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. In collaboration with Chiefs, Grand Council, and Health Directors, Tajikeimik will build on and evolve the health and wellness services and programs used by Mi'kmaw people in Nova Scotia; improve health service delivery; and strengthen coordination with Federal and Provincial health system partners—with the goal of improving overall health for Mi'kmaq and communities.

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