

# SER CRIANÇA PROJECT – a community-based learning project for vulnerable children and their families

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## Background

A fundamental part of good oral health (OH) is prevention which in turn depends on the ability to promote healthy behaviours. The project "Ser Criança" intends to evaluate the condition of a group of children belonging to the municipality of Gouveia, Portugal, who show difficulties, understanding the meaning, the cause and the type of disturbance combining health education and family. The social problem that "Ser Criança" intends to address is that of children's social exclusion, consequently poverty and other forms of extreme deprivation faced by children and their families. For this, and through the partnership between FMD-UCP and Reencontro Association, the "Ser Criança" project was extended to oral health, emerging the "Ser Criança - Learning to Smile".

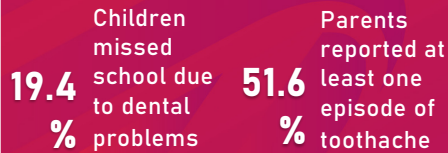
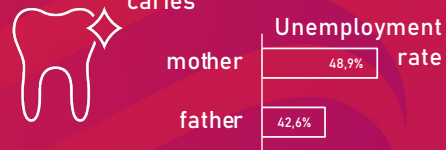
## Materials & Methods

A cross-sectional study was developed to characterize sociodemographic aspects and OH status of 47 children (4 to 12 years). Parents answered a questionnaire about OH issues and children were observed to identify oral diseases. Based on the treatment needs and sociodemographic profile of the population a website was developed, as well as a protocol adapted to OH literacy and dental appointments applied to these children and their families.

## Aims & Objectives

Characterize the OH status of a group of children of the centre region of Portugal and define strategies of educational intervention adapted to the sociodemographic and OH needs of this vulnerable community.

**Results** Children in the sample had an average of 2.63 dental caries



## Ser Criança - Learn and Smile WEBSITE

- ✓ for children, parents, and educators
- ✓ offers OH literacy strategies and dental appointment protocols for the children and families.



## Conclusions

- OH treatments and promotion activities raise OH levels in communities.
- Actions must be adapted to cater to the specific needs of different populations.
- Community-based learning is essential for dental students to develop their skills.
- Interventions involving recreational activities have been found effective in transmitting motivational values related to oral health.

