

## **Evaluation of the Six Child Nutrition Fact Sheets**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The Department of Human Services funded the needs study, planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the Child Nutrition Fact Sheets. Through the Fact Sheet Program the Department aimed:

To provide high quality, consistent and reliable nutrition information about children's nutrition and eating patterns which was to be made available to both families and professionals working with young families (Department of Human Services, 1997, p. 5).

The Fact Sheets were to be made available through professionals working with young families. At the time of writing this report, the Fact Sheet Program had been through two phases. Phase One involved the nutrition needs assessment research project (Filling the Gap, DHS, 1997) and the subsequent production of the Child Nutrition Fact Sheets. Phase Two involved professional up-front training undertaken between November 1998 and February 1999 (O'Callaghan and Myers, 1999), the implementation of the Fact Sheet Program, and the evaluation. Phase Three of the Fact Sheet Program will include the further development of the program.

The target groups for the Six Child Nutrition Fact Sheets were:

- Victorian families with young children from just born to eight years of age.
- Professionals including:
  - Maternal and Child Health Nurses
  - School Nurses
  - Long Day Child Care Centre staff
  - Paediatric dieticians

Based on the findings of the nutrition needs assessment research and stakeholder consultation, the Six Child Nutrition Fact Sheets were designed during Phase One. They included:

- Why no sweet drinks for children **(0-8 years)**
- Food in the first year of life **(0-1 year)**
- Healthy eating for young toddlers **(1-2 years)**
- Healthy eating for older toddlers **(2-4 years)**
- Healthy eating for preschoolers **(4-6 years)**
- Healthy eating in the primary school years **(6-8 years)**

An evaluation team from RMIT University in Melbourne was commissioned by the Department to undertake the evaluation. The evaluation's research, analysis and report writing activities were undertaken over a five month period from early September 2000 to early March 2001. While the Fact Sheets were distributed among the different professionals