## Did You Know?

Being prepared for school starts with a dental screening. Kindergarteners are now required to have one.

A healthy mouth is important. **Dental problems can prevent children from doing well in school**. **Kindergarteners are required to have a dental screening** so that any problems can be fixed and they attend school ready to learn.

**Cavities are common.** Tooth decay (cavities) is the most common chronic disease in children.

**Cavities can cause pain.** Pain can make it hard for children to pay attention in school, prevent them from eating well and keep them awake at night. All of this can affect their ability to learn.

**Dental problems affect attendance and grades.** Children with dental problems miss more school than children with good dental health.

## Facts About Kindergarten Dental Screenings

1. **It's easy to get your child screened.** Local health departments provide the screenings (oral health assessments) before the start of kindergarten at places like preschools, school registration events, community events and in schools during the kindergarten school year. Check with your school or the local health department for a schedule.

2. **The screening is free.** There is no cost to you if the local health department does the screening. Check with the school to find out when the health department will be at the school, or call the health department to check when and where they will be screening.

3. **A dental screening is simple and fast.** A dental professional will look into your child's mouth and note what they see on the screening form. No treatment is done. It's simply a quick look in the mouth. They will let you know if your child needs to see a dentist.

4. **Help is available.** Your local health department can help you find a dentist if you don't have one. Your child may be able to enroll in the Michigan Healthy Kids Dental Program if they don't have insurance. For information about Healthy Kids Dental, visit the Healthy Kids Dental website.

# Common Questions

## How will my child benefit from having a dental screening?

Dental problems can cause pain and make it difficult for children to pay attention in school, prevent them from eating and sleeping well, and can even affect their ability to speak and socialize. All of this can affect a child's ability to learn and do well in school. Children benefit from having a dental screening to check for any dental problems that need to be fixed so that they are ready to learn.

## Where can I get the screening done?

Local health departments provide the screenings before the start of kindergarten at places like preschools, school registration events, community events and in schools during the kindergarten school year. Check with your child's school to find out when the health department will be screening at the school or call your local health department to check their schedule. **There is no cost to you if the screening is done by the local health department.** Or, you can take your child to your family dentist to have the screening done there.

## Do my older children need a dental screening, too?

The dental screening requirement is only for kindergarteners, but it is recommended that all children see a dentist at least once a year.

## What if I don't have a dentist or I can't afford one?

Your local health department can help you find a dental provider in your area. Your child may be able to enroll in the Michigan Healthy Kids Dental Program if they don't have insurance. For information about Healthy Kids Dental, visit the Healthy Kids dental website.

**For More Information:**

MDHHS-KOHA@michigan.gov

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