

Healthy Teeth = Healthy Kids!

Published: Monday, 30 January 2017 09:21

Written by: Questions?



Oral Health Care for Children and Families

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School-based Sealant Programs help all kids receive affordable, preventative oral health care.



**Let's improve access to
dental care for all kids.**
Oral health pain is one of the top
reasons for school absenteeism.



Tooth decay is the top preventable disease for kids. When kids experience poor oral health, [their school attendance and grades are likely to suffer](#). Kids experiencing dental pain cannot concentrate in school and fully participate in activities. What's more, oral health decay can lead to other serious medical problems. An estimated 65% of Utah children have experienced a dental cavity by the time they are 9-years-old.

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The best way to treat cavities is through prevention: we can prevent oral health problems before they occur. But many families have trouble accessing affordable dental care for their kids. Working parents may not be able to get the time off for a routine visit. Low-income children, children of color and children in rural areas have an even harder time accessing a dentist in their communities. According to [a recent Department of Health report](#), Hispanic children were five times more likely to report having unmet dental health needs compared to White children.

School-based prevention or sealant programs are one of the best ways to ensure all kids can receive affordable, preventative oral health care.

We need to help more children access school-based sealant programs and affordable care. Voices for Utah Children supports policies that expand dental care access for all children including:

- Changes to the Utah Medicaid dental program to better meet the needs of low-income families and expand school-based care, including reimbursing for patient assessment in a public health settings (Medicaid code D0191).
- Expanding Medicaid and CHIP oral health quality performance measures, monitoring and evaluation to improve kids' utilization of preventive care visits.
- Expanding dental health benefits for children in the marketplace, including a more robust pediatric dental benefit package and embedding children's dental health benefits into all plans.
- A comprehensive state plan to address oral health access disparities experienced by low-income children, children of color, and children in rural areas across the state.

Our children should not be falling behind due to cavities or oral health pain. Together we can strengthen our pediatric oral health system so all kids can succeed.

Image Credit: © Oksun70 | Dreamstime.com - [Kid Girl Brushing Teeth In Bathroom Photo](#)

Image Credit: [American Dental Association](#)

For 30 years now, Voices for Utah Children has called on our state, federal and local leaders to put children's needs first. But the work is not done. The children of 30

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years ago now have children of their own. Too many of these children are growing up in poverty, without access to healthcare or quality educational opportunities.

How can you be involved?

[Make a tax-deductible donation](#) to Voices for Utah Children—or [join our Network](#) with a monthly donation of \$20 or more. Network membership includes complimentary admission to Network events with food, socializing, and opportunity to meet child advocacy experts. And don't forget to [join our listserv](#) to stay informed!

We look forward to the future of Voices for Utah Children and we hope you will be a part of our next 30 years.

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