Have You Heard?

A new kindergarten entry requirement takes effect in the 2024-2025 school year. Children will now be required to have a dental assessment prior to starting kindergarten.

Dental-related problems prevent kids from reaching their full learning potential. To prevent this, Michigan created the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Program (KOHA) to improve school readiness and raise families' awareness of the importance of good oral health.

Children's oral health is a key public health priority. Early detection of dental problems and connecting children to needed care will help children succeed.

Poor dental health affects attendance and grades. Kids with poor dental health are 3x more likely to miss school because of dental problems.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in children. Almost half of Michigan Head Start children have tooth decay and close to one-third have untreated decay.

What Should School Districts Do?

1. Notify parents of the kindergarten dental assessment requirement by providing information in registration packets and communications to parents.
2. Communicate the importance of oral health; encourage parents to have their child's dental assessment completed.
3. Collaborate with the local health department to offer on-site screening events.
4. Submit required school dental assessment data to MDHHS.

Common Questions

How will students benefit from having a dental assessment?

Students will benefit from having a dental assessment (screening) because it will identify those who may have dental-related issues and connect them to needed care. Oral health problems can cause pain and make it difficult for children to eat, speak, sleep, or even socialize, all of which can prevent children from reaching their full learning potential.

What if a parent does not have a dentist and asks how they can get the screening done?

The screening can be done through the local health department or screening event such as Kindergarten Roundups, back to school events, etc. You can also contact the local health department for help finding a dental home for a family if they do not have one. Consider assisting families with enrolling their student in *Michigan's Healthy Kids Dental* program, by visiting: https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/healthcare/childrenteens/hkdental

How can our school assist with this law?

Schools should consider working with the local health department to offer on-site screening events and should notify parents of the dental assessment requirement through various distribution channels such as parent letters, registration packets, and social media. Schools can also assist by encouraging parents to have their children screened, providing information on where the screenings can be done including any dates and times of school-sponsored events, and raising awareness among children and families about the importance of good oral health. Schools are required to submit their dental assessment data to MDHHS by November 1st of each year, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

For more information

Contact MDHHS-KOHA@michigan.gov or locally at:

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