Have You Heard?

Michigan passed a law that requires children enrolling into their first year of school have an oral health assessment.

Dental-related problems prevent children from reaching their full learning potential. To improve school readiness, Michigan created the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Program (KOHA). These dental assessments will identify children with unmet dental needs and refer them for treatment. The program aims to increase access to dental care, help establish dental homes, and raise families' awareness of the importance of good oral health.

The oral health assessment requirement will not alter your usual office protocols for new or existing patients. The only additional part of the visit is completion of the required KOHA assessment form.

- Either a dental examination or a dental assessment done within 6 months of starting school will meet KOHA requirements.
- A dentist, dental therapist, or registered dental hygienist can provide the service within their scope of practice.
- Results must be documented on the KOHA assessment form. The completed form should be given to the parent or guardian to return to the school.

You Play an Important Role

Your participation is essential to meeting KOHA's overarching goal of improving oral health among Michigan's children. Beyond providing kindergarten dental assessments in your office, your collaboration in accepting referrals and providing treatment is a critical link in an effective system of screening, referral, and treatment of children with unmet dental needs.

Common Questions

Why was the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Program (KOHA) put into place?

To improve the oral health of Michigan children and increase school readiness, Public Act 316 of 2023 was enacted to ensure that children enrolling into their first year of school receive an oral health assessment prior to starting school. Dental assessments can identify untreated dental disease and refer children for care, connect families to safety-net resources, and provide education to children and families about the importance of good oral health. Public Act 316 of 2023 includes the requirement that MDHHS establish and maintain an oral health assessment program in each area of the state served by a local health department (LHD).

Who does the assessments?

Under the law, any dentist, registered dental hygienist (RDH), or dental therapist licensed in Michigan can conduct the assessments. The assessments may be done through the LHD or within a private dental office.

Where can I get a copy of the KOHA assessment form?

It is likely the parent or guardian will bring the form to your office for completion. You can download a copy of the form here: https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/adult-child-serv/childrenfamilies/familyhealth/oralhealth

On the form, it asks if the child had an exam or an assessment. What is the difference?

A dental exam is completed by a dentist or dental therapist, and a dental assessment is completed by an RDH.

If I complete the exam and KOHA form for a student who is not my patient, are they now a patient of record of my dental practice?

Where the assessment is completed and by whom will determine if the patient is a patient of record of the dental office. If the assessment is provided in a dental office, then the patient would become a patient of record of the dental office. Some LHDs may ask dental professionals in the community to assist with their program and provide assessments at school pre-enrollment events, health fairs, or some other type of community event. If the assessment occurs during a community event sponsored by the LHD, it would be the responsibility of the LHD to provide information to the parent and follow up.

For more information

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

Elisa Dack RDH, MHSA
Community Health Director
Phone: (989) 329-4341
E-mail: edack@dhd2.org

MDHHS
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

District Health Department No. 2
www.dhd2.org