



Have You Heard ?

Michigan passed a law to give children the opportunity to receive a dental screening before they enter kindergarten.

A healthy mouth is important. Dental problems can prevent children from doing well in school. **Children should have a dental screening before starting school** so that any problems can be fixed and they start 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 all 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 Screening

- 1 **It's easy to get your child screened.** The school should give you a screening form to take to your dentist or the local health department to get the screening done. If the school has a registration event, you may be able to have the screening done there.
- 2 **Screening is free.** There is no cost if the local health department does the screening. Check with the school to see if it will have a registration event and if dental staff from the health department will be there or call the health department to check when and where they are screening.
- 3 **Screening is simple and fast.** A dental provider will look into your child's open mouth and note what they see on the screening form. They will give you a copy of the completed form with results, and they will let you know if your child needs to see a dentist.
- 4 **Help is available.** The 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: www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/healthcare/childrenteens/hkdental

Common Questions

How will my child benefit from having a dental screening?

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

How can I get the screening done?

The school should give you a screening form. You can take this form to your dentist to get the screening done. The local health department can also do the screening. **The screening is free if it's done by the local health department.** Check with the school to see if it will have a registration event and if dental staff from the health department will be there or check with the health department for their screening schedule.

Do my older children need a screening too?

The dental screening law is only for children entering kindergarten, but it is highly 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?

The local health department can provide you with a list of dental providers in your area. Check the Michigan Oral Health Directory for a list of low- and no-cost dental providers by county: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/adult-child-serv/childrenfamilies/familyhealth/oralhealth>. If your child does not have dental insurance, they may be eligible for the Michigan Healthy Kids Dental Program: www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/healthcare/childrenteens/hkdental

