

What Can I Do?

Educate your students and parents about oral health. Dental caries is preventable with good home care, dental sealants, and fluoride varnish.

For every child without medical insurance, 2-3 lack dental insurance. This is often a barrier for preventing dental problems or treating them early.

Programs like Smiles in Schools help bridge this gap by bringing dental professionals to your school.



Want to Schedule a Smiles in Schools Clinic?

The regional dental team in your area will work with you to plan this event. To get started, complete these steps:

- ☐ Get Approval for the Free Preventive Dental Clinic
- ☐ Fax Completed MOU Face Page as Instructed
- ☐ Locate a Space for the Team to Set Up
- ☐ Contact your Regional Dental Team.

Regional Dental Team Contact Information

Health Service Regions 1 and 2

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Questions? Email dental@dshs.texas.gov or visit dshs.texas.gov/dental.

Smiles in Schools



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

**Healthy Teeth
Make Healthy Kids**

Oral Health in Texas

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. Over 67% of Texas third graders have experienced tooth decay, but the good news is that it is preventable.



It's Hard to Make A's with a Toothache

- Children with poor oral health are 1.4 times more likely to have poor school performance and 3 times more likely to miss school.
- Poor nutrition from difficulty eating and a lack of sleep contribute to an inability to focus and perform well in school.
- Children with dental pain are also more likely to feel worthless, unhappy, shy or embarrassed.

Smiles in Schools

Smiles in Schools (SiS) is a school-based oral health program to help prevent cavities and keep kids healthy. Licensed dental professionals provide on-site preventive services with mobile dental equipment.

Services include:

- Oral Health Education
- Dental Screening
- Dental Sealants
- Fluoride Varnish
- Letter for parent with dental findings and recommendations.

Dental screenings or limited dental exams do not replace comprehensive exams with the child's dental home.

What does it cost?

As part of the Department of State Health Services, this program is free to eligible schools and children.

The Role of the School Nurse

The school nurse plays a pivotal role in the success of an SiS clinics. Regional dental teams (RDTs) need the assistance of the school nurse or other staff member to obtain the appropriate permissions from parents. The forms also help the team to prepare for the clinic so that it is quick and efficient.

Tips for a Successful Clinic

Consent forms are required for students to participate. To ensure a successful clinic, you can help to increase participation by:

- Hanging posters announcing the clinic,
- Include clinic reminders during announcements,
- Include clinic information on the marquee,
- Promote the event through social media,
- Remind parents to return signed consent forms through online or texting programs,
- Periodically remind teachers to collect the consent forms from their students,
- Provide incentives for staff or students who return consent forms (i.e. pizza party or gift card)

Speak with your regional dental team for more ideas on how to help increase participation.

This is your oral public health program at work for you!

