



# KINDERGARTEN ORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: WHAT SCHOOLS SHOULD KNOW

Michigan law (The Public Health Code 316 of 2023) requires Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) to provide no cost dental screenings to children 6 months prior to the start of kindergarten or during the kindergarten year. This law was created to improve school readiness and raise family awareness of the importance of good oral health. Screening occurs in most Oakland County public, private and charter schools, preschools and at OCHD office locations by appointment.

## Why screen children in kindergarten?

- Children's oral health is a key public health priority. Early detection of dental problems and connecting children to needed care will help them succeed in school.
- Poor dental health affects attendance and grades. Kids with poor dental health are 3 times more likely to miss school because of their dental problems.
- Tooth decay (cavities) is the most common chronic disease in children. Almost half of Michigan's Head Start children have cavities and about one-third have untreated decay. Cavities are a bacterial infection that can spread to other teeth and cause those to develop cavities. A cavity on a baby tooth can also affect the developing tooth.

## What should school districts do?

1. Notify parents of the dental screening requirement; provide information about where the screening can be done including dates and times of on-site screening events.
2. Communicate the importance of oral health; encourage parents to have their child's dental screening completed.
3. Collaborate with OCHD to offer on-site screenings.
4. Submit required school dental screening data to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

## How can teachers & school staff assist the dentist/dental hygienist with on-site screenings?

1. All children in kindergarten will be screened unless it is noted by school personnel on the class list. Parents may choose to opt out if the child was screened by their family dentist.
2. Direct parents/guardians to OCHD to answer any questions
3. Complete the dental screening checklist provided by OCHD a week prior to the screening event.

## How do we report our data?

All Michigan schools are required by law to report their dental screening data to the State. Schools that receive proof of screening from a parent/guardian or local health department should select the "Dental Screened" checkbox in Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR). Selecting this box in MCIR indicates a student was screened and fulfills the school's reporting requirement to the State.

### MORE INFO

Call 248-858-1306, email [OCHD-Detntal@oakgov.com](mailto:OCHD-Detntal@oakgov.com), or visit [oakgov.info/dental](http://oakgov.info/dental). Additional information can be found at the [Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Program](#) website or email [MDHHS-KOHA@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-KOHA@michigan.gov).

