Improving oral health for Washington's students

Washington State Department of Health

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ARCORA
The Foundation of Delta Dental of Washington

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Why is oral health important?

- Dental disease limits children's ability to:
  - Eat
  - Play
  - Sleep
  - Learn
  - Be self-confident
  - Get a job when older

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Children's Oral Health Status in Washington: Smile Survey

- Washington State Smile Survey AKA: Basic Screening Survey
- Comprehensive source of children's oral health data
- Go-To Resource: Policy makers, State Board of Health, Oral Health Programs like Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD), Local Health Departments
- Public-Private Partnership: Dept of Health, OSPI, Local Health Jurisdictions, Dental Providers, Arcora Foundation

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Children's Oral Health Status in Washington: Smile Survey

- Frequency: Twice per decade
- Kindergarten, 2nd , 3rd grades
- Provides a "point in time" look at disease rates
  - Untreated/treated decay
  - Dental sealants
- Disparity findings: Demographic data
  - De-identified, no names are collected

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Children's Oral Health Status in Washington: Smile Survey

- Smile Survey = Visual Checks & Data Collection for Public Health Core Function:
  - Three Core Functions of Public Health: Assessment, Policy Development, Assurance
    - Effective system which enables equitable access to care
    - Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation and continuous quality improvement
- Dental Programs = Dental Screenings & Services

  Both are very important to include, especially this year

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Smile Survey Results 2005-2016

Source: Washington State Department of Health. Smile Survey 2015-2016: The Oral Health of Washington's Children. Olympia, WA, 2017.
Available from https://www.ecdd.org/www.lhcsc/wa-smile-survey-report-2016.pdf
Smile Survey Dashboard Link: https://arcorafoundation.org/oral-health-status-dashboard/

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Smile Survey Results (2016)

- On any given day, **144,300 seven, eight, and nine-year-olds** in Washington were affected by **decay**.
- Nearly **38%** of children started **Kindergarten** with **tooth decay**; almost **13%** had **rampant decay**.
- Nearly **one in six 3rd graders** suffered from **severe (rampant) decay.**
- **Native American** and other racial and ethnic minoritized children have the **highest rates of tooth decay.**
- **Twice as many** children from **low-income** families suffered the effects of **rampant tooth decay** than did children from **higher-income** households.

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Source: Washington State Department of Health. Smile Survey 2015-2016: The Oral Health of Washington's Children. Olympia, WA, 2017. Available from: https://www.ambd.org/www/docs/wa-smile-survey-report-2016.pdf
Smile Survey Dashboard Link: https://arcorafoundation.org/oral-health-status-dashboard/

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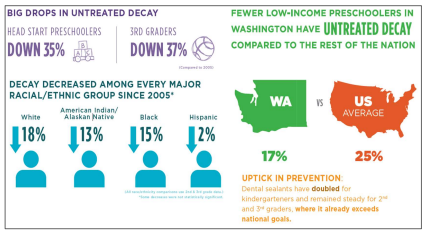
Smile Survey Results: Progress Made



- Washington state is among the **top five states** in the country for the **lowest rates of decay** among **3rd graders**.
- Washington state oral health status **improved** since 2005 in some areas:

Source: Washington State Department of Health. Smile Survey 2015-2016: The Oral Health of Washington's Children. Olympia, WA, 2017. Available from: https://www.ambd.org/www/docs/wa-smile-survey-report-2016.pdf
Smile Survey Dashboard Link: https://arcorafoundation.org/oral-health-status-dashboard/

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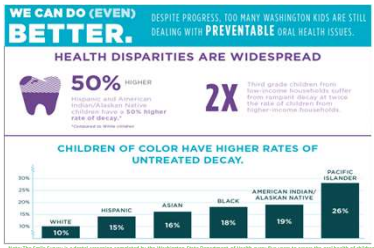
Smile Survey Results: Challenges Remain



Note: The Smile Survey is a dental screening completed by the Washington State Department of Health every five years to assess the oral health of children throughout the state.

Source: Washington State Department of Health. Smile Survey 2015-2016: The Oral Health of Washington's Children. Olympia, WA, 2017. Available from: https://www.ambd.org/www/docs/wa-smile-survey-report-2016.pdf
Smile Survey Dashboard Link: https://arcorafoundation.org/oral-health-status-dashboard/

- Despite improvements in some measures, **tooth decay** continues to be a **major health concern** for children in Washington.
- **More than half** of **3rd grade** children and about **4 in 10 kindergartners** and **low-income preschoolers** in Washington experience **tooth decay.**
- Significant **disparities** exist by **income, race, ethnicity**, and **language** spoken at home.

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Smile Survey 2022-2023

- The 2020 Smile Survey was paused
- Two years since mobile dental programs last provided care in school settings
- 2022-2023 Smile Survey will be critical
  - Current oral health status
  - Impacts of pandemic and reduced access to dental care

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Smile Survey: Why should schools make time?

- Children in pain can't learn, think, sleep
- Children with painful teeth struggle to eat nutritious foods
- Children with painful teeth can exhibit a range of unexpected behaviors
  - Aggression
  - Seclusion

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Smile Survey: Why should schools make time?

Findings from the Smile Survey will help us to understand and assess how our policies and programs for children's dental health are working, and will provide valuable insight into how we can do better.

Thank you!

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What schools can do

- Administrative opportunities
  - Gather students' dental provider information on health history forms.
  - Develop school policies (District Wellness Plan) on access to water, healthy foods, sugary beverages, etc.
  - Participate in the Smile Survey.

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What schools can do

- Student and family education opportunities
  - Seize teachable moments with kids! Share oral health information at parent events.
  - Provide classroom education.
  - Educational materials around school - have posters up in your office and other places about sugary beverages, tooth brushing, etc.
  - Be a resource for reliable, evidence-based information on community water fluoridation.

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More information:

DentistLink.org

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WATER FLUORIDATION FOR A HEALTHY WASHINGTON

Washington State Department of Health

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What schools can do

- Program opportunities
  - Provide school wide oral health screenings.
  - Help set up a school tooth brushing or sealant program.
  - Collaborate with local community dental providers.
  - Collaborate with an existing school-based health center or explore opportunities to bring one to your school through the Washington School Based Health Alliance or WA DOH.

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Interested in talking more?

- Email us to discuss how you can address oral health at your school or in your community
  - Stacy Torrance
    storrance@ArcoraFoundation.org
  - Shelley Guinn
    shelley.guinn@doh.wa.gov

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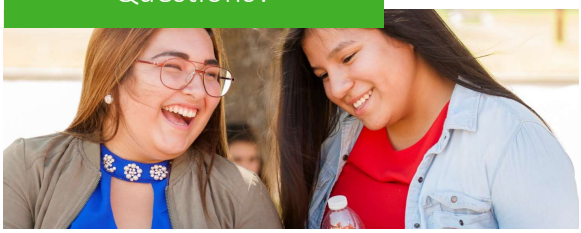
Questions?



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