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Dental Health Solutions for Children

A Community Responds to Children in Pain



A Salem-Keizer School District third grade boy—unable to concentrate in class due to a severe toothache—was sent to the front office to put ice on his swollen cheek. Within hours, his cheek swelled to twice its normal size. With no money or insurance, options

were scarce. Luckily, an appointment was donated by a local dentist. When the tooth was extracted, the dentist informed school staff that most likely within a few days the infection of this abscessed tooth would have been fatal.

This 2001 incident was the catalyst for action. Students in the Salem-Keizer School District had been faced with the negative impacts of dental disease for years and it was time to take action. With help from Stand for Children, a national grassroots child advocacy organization, improving the dental health of Salem-Keizer area children became a community-wide effort.



Dental Health Solutions
for CHILDREN
SALEM-KEIZER

"Salem-Keizer Public Schools is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution."

To learn more about Dental Health Solutions for Children contact Jessica Minahan, Dental Health Coordinator, Salem-Keizer School District (503) 399-3101 or minahan_jessica@salkeiz.k12.or.us.

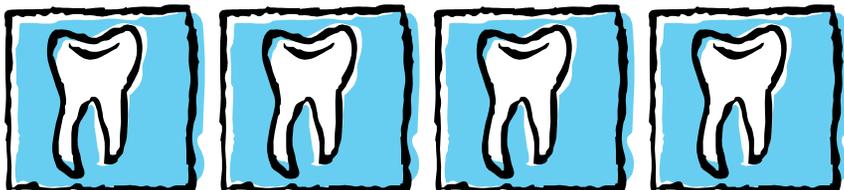
Local dental health professionals, community agencies and school personnel formed **Dental Health Solutions for Children**. The comprehensive school-based approach includes dental health education, prevention and access to treatment.

Dental Health Education

- **Parent Education** focuses on the importance of “baby teeth,” the role bacteria plays in dental disease, how nutrition affects teeth, and proper oral hygiene. Lessons are presented at Head Start parent meetings, teen parent programs, health fairs, housing shelters, and other venues.
- **Student Education** offered to all 46 elementary schools focuses on proper home care and nutrition, and empowers students to outsmart cavity-causing bacteria.

Prevention Services

- **School-Based Dental Screenings** conducted by dental health professionals serve as a tool to help identify and prioritize students’ oral health needs. Result forms are sent home after the screening to notify parents of findings. The oral health rating (1-4) is used for consistency throughout the District. 1=no obvious cavities, 2=cavities, 3=obvious cavities, 4=urgent needs.
- **Fluoride Varnish Project:** Dental hygienists visit Head Start preschool sites to apply fluoride varnish to children’s teeth; minimizing the chances of dental decay.



Access To Treatment

Salem-Keizer students experiencing dental pain that effects their ability to eat, sleep and learn in school are provided free care by a network of local providers. In most cases, students are identified through school-based screenings.

- **Neighborhood Dentist Program** ~ This safety-net program pairs each of 64 schools in the District with a local dentist who donates one urgent treatment appointment per month to low-income, uninsured students in acute pain.

- **Medical Teams International Mobile Unit** ~ Dentist (and sometimes staff) volunteer for five hours at school-based clinics, providing care to students in need.



- **Give Kids a Smile Clinics** ~ Dentists offer services in their own offices to pre-screened students. School staff provides interpretation and transportation when needed, and parents are required to attend.



- **Boys & Girls Club Health and Dental Services Center** ~



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Dental professionals volunteer at the Club’s dental clinic providing exams, treatment, cleanings and sealants to pre-screened Boys & Girls Club members.

- **The Children’s Program** ~ The Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB) and ODS created the Children’s Program in partnership with Willamette Dental, Kaiser Permanente and Oregon dentists to ensure that uninsured children in the state of Oregon have access to dental care. Referrals for students ages 5-15 are submitted by school staff for students who are experiencing dental pain.