

ORAL HEALTH

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With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, FamilyVoices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. www.familyvoices.org and www.fv-impact.org. This digest is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Division of Child, Adolescent, and Family Health UCMC21535.

FAMILY VOICES®

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Ensuring Children Get Needed Dental Services

Not all children receive the dental care they need. A recent report that looked at the Medicaid population in nine states noted that many children do not receive either the preventive or treatment services needed. We also know that children with disabilities are less likely to receive dental treatment than children without disabilities, a fact confirmed by this study.

To read this report, go to: www.cms.gov/mmrr/Downloads/MMRR2013_003_03_b04.pdf

For children with disabilities:

Sometimes other health care needs take priority over dental care, but try not to ignore dental care for too long. Some families set aside 10 minutes in the evening before everyone gets too tired for a family brushing time. Parents can model brushing and flossing. Chewing on a clean tooth brush or clean washcloth can help clean teeth and gums for children with sensory issues.

Some children may not be able to communicate dental problems. If a child is acting cranky or having meltdowns, it could be because his or her teeth or gums hurt.

Finding a dentist who is willing and able to provide the care your child needs can be a challenge. Look for LEND-trained

dentists in your state. These dentists are trained in a special program at the university. Not all states have them, but it is worth seeking them out.

There aren't as many Medicaid dentists as we need, and they are not necessarily nearby. Start seeking a dentist when your kids are small.

- For help in locating a Medicaid-participating dentist trained in special care, ask other parents, or contact your state's Family-to-Family Health Information Center. For contact information: www.fv-ncfpp.org/

Advocate for your child by letting the dentist know the approaches and techniques that work best. Providers may need specialized equipment or training to handle some disabilities.

Other Resources

- For fun resources to help children learn good oral health habits, go to: www.2min2x.org
- For information about the important role fluoride plays in healthy teeth, go to: www.ilikemyteeth.org/

