

## “EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ORAL HEALTH & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT”

The following data reflects some of the findings of studies that indicate *why* and *how* children with poor oral health have decreased school performance, poor social relationships, and less success later in life.



**School health services are critical to promoting health and preventing disease and disability in children and youth.**

- According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health, tooth decay is the single most common childhood disease.
- Absenteeism among students is clearly associated with school failure. Children experiencing pain from tooth decay and other oral health problems are likely to be distracted and unable to concentrate on their schoolwork.
- School-based or school-linked medical and dental services reduce absenteeism by providing convenient and accessible on-site services.
- Children without health insurance are less likely to have a family dentist or to receive the preventive care or dental treatment that enables them to grow into healthy, productive adults.
- More than 50% of children have dental caries by the second grade. By the time students complete high school, about 80% have dental caries.
- National data indicate that 80% of dental caries found in the permanent teeth of children is concentrated in 20% of the child/adolescent population.
- Children who receive dental sealants in school-based programs have 60% less decay on the surfaces of their back teeth for up to five years.