

## REACHING GEORGIA'S CHILDREN WHERE THEY LEARN

**G**etting an early start with regular dental care is an important step on the road to teaching children healthy oral care habits that will last a lifetime. The Georgia Oral Health Prevention Program is committed to providing diagnostic, preventive and basic dental treatment to eligible children.



**Staffed by licensed dentists, dental hygienists and trained dental assistants, our school-based dental program provides a pleasant, non-threatening environment that helps children feel good about visiting the dentist; establishing trust and confidence about dentistry that will last a lifetime.**

### Oral Health Education

Instruction in oral care teaches school children the importance of proper brushing, flossing, sound oral health habits, good nutrition and oral injury prevention to achieve and maintain optimum dental/oral health.

### Dental Screenings/Examinations

A dental inspection of the mouth by a licensed professional will reveal if there are any detectable dental or oral problems. The most common oral health problems children experience are tooth decay, gum disease, malocclusion (crooked or misaligned teeth) and injuries. Most of these problems are preventable or can be corrected. Early diagnosis and prompt treatment can eliminate pain, infection and disease progression. Early detection and treatment are also most cost effective and less traumatic for the child.

### Dental Cleanings

A dentist or dental hygienist removes soft and hard deposits and polishes the child's teeth, decreasing the bacterial deposits that lead to decay and infection.



**The Healthy People  
2010 Objective is for  
50% of children to have  
dental sealants.**

**The 2005 Georgia Third  
Grade Oral Health  
Survey found that only  
35% of low income third  
grade children have  
dental sealants as com-  
pared to 45% of children  
from higher  
income households.  
Additionally, 14% of  
third grade children in  
the survey who needed  
dental care, could not  
obtain it.**

## **Fluoride Treatments or Rinse**

Fluoride treatments applied to the enamel surface strengthen enamel and prevent tooth decay. A dental professional or school nurse may instruct elementary school children on how to perform fluoride mouth rinses in the classroom. For high-risk children who lack adequate fluoride in their water supply or have a high rate of tooth decay, a topical fluoride treatment is often recommended.

## **Dental Sealants**

Dental sealants are plastic-like, protective coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of permanent molar (back) teeth to seal out bacteria that causes tooth decay.

## **X-rays**

X-rays may be needed for dentists to more thoroughly diagnose and treat oral health conditions that cannot be detected by visual examinations. In addition to detecting tooth decay, x-rays can check for erupting teeth, diagnose bone diseases, evaluate oral injuries, and monitor oral growth and development.

## **Dental Referrals**

An evaluation form describing the child's oral health is sent home to inform parents. If a child is found to need immediate or emergency dental care, a referral note that provides information on oral health care resources will be included as part of the parental notification process.

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The Georgia Oral Health Prevention Program is financed by state and local funds, which enable the program to remain focused on providing the best quality of oral health care to the maximum number of low-income, high-risk children. Medicaid/PeachCare reimbursements are accepted and sliding fee scales based upon income may be offered to qualifying families.