

Early Smiles Sacramento

An innovative public-private partnership dedicated to minimizing the dental disease burden among children in Sacramento County.

The Dental Disease Epidemic:

- **Nationally**, tooth decay is the **most common chronic disease among children** age 6 to 11 years despite being 100% preventable.
- In **California**, **one in three children** are affected by tooth decay by third grade.
- In **Sacramento**, **despite a 100% increase in the utilization** of dental services between 2008 and 2013, many children with Medi-Cal Dental Plans (through Geographic Managed Care – GMC) go without an annual dental visit or preventive care.

A myriad of issues contributes to the rate of utilization of dental services in Sacramento. Early Smiles Sacramento, a Center for Oral Health program addresses them through a sustainable, school-based approach with goal of connecting families to their dental provide in timely and effective manner.

Effects of Poor Oral Health in Schools:

- **874,000 school days missed** per year in California due to dental problems.
- Low-income children are **12times more likely to miss school** because of dental problems than children from higher-income families.
- Children with tooth pain are **4 times more likely to have below average GPA.**

What is Early Smiles Sacramento?

Early Smiles Sacramento is a unique community-based program of the Center for Oral Health that serves the most vulnerable children in Sacramento County.

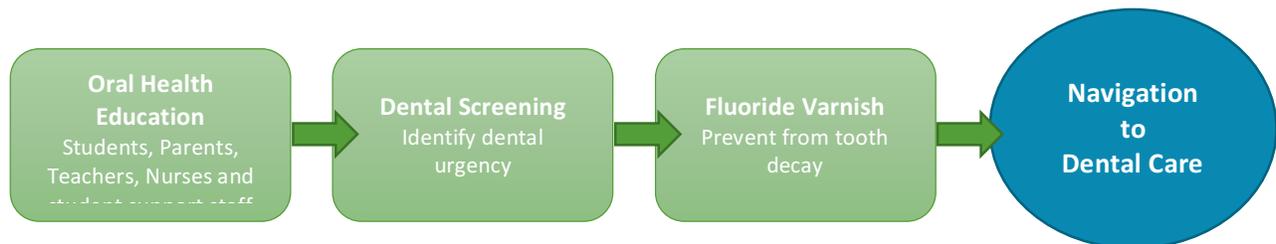
Managed care plans in Sacramento – Liberty Dental Plan, Access Dental, Health Net, were tasked by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to identify innovative solutions to eliminate barriers to access to care. The three managed care plans, in collaboration with Center for Oral Health, designed Early Smiles Sacramento. The program has since expanded to serve children 0-5 years of age with funding from First 5 Sacramento. This program brings greater accountability to Medi-Cal Dental Plans; leverages Medi-Cal Dental funds to create sustainable program; and improves access to care, while keeping children in their classrooms. ESS provides evidence-based preventive dental services and helps navigate every child to a dental home. ESS also provides training to primary care providers to enhance well-child visits with preventive dental care.

The program is advised by a community advisory group. COH also works in close partnership with the school nurses, dental plans, and community partners to ensure timely provision of oral health care.

How is Early Smiles Sacramento unique?

- Public-private partnership to which, high accountability to program success between all parties is integral
- One of the very few school-based oral health programs driven by the aim of achieving Triple Aim.
- Sustainable and responsible from the get-go since the program's end goal is to connect children to a dental home and foster continued dental care.

What services does Early Smiles Sacramento provide?



- **Oral Health Education** is an effective tool in enhancing knowledge, attitude, and practices toward oral health in decreasing plaque accumulation, decay, and bleeding gums. ESS provides Oral health education to students, parents, nurses and student support staff at schools and community events.
- **Dental screening** to identify the dental urgency of the child. Dental urgency 1 is child without visible decay. Dental urgency 2 is child with visual tooth decay. Dental urgency 3 is child in pain or has active abscess.
- **Fluoride varnish treatment** to help prevent tooth decay and protect children's vulnerable tooth.
- **Navigation** to dental care. ESS navigates children that has active Medi-Cal Dental status to Medi-Cal Dental (GMC) plans to find dental care close to child's home and also arranges transportation and translation, if needed. We navigate uninsured children to Sacramento Covered. We also navigate Children with Medi-Cal Dental Fee For Service and private dental insurance to Sacramento District Dental Society.

Program Impact

- **12 School Districts** throughout Sacramento County: San Juan USD, Sacramento City USD, Twin Rivers USD, Elk Grove USD, Rancho Cordova USD, Natomas USD, Robla USD, Center USD, Galt USD, Arcohe, Gateway, Elverta and SETA.
- **Serving over 200 schools** throughout Sacramento County.
- **Total Dental Screening** provided to **59,701 children**.
- **Total Fluoride varnish** provided **48,000 children**.

Early Smiles Sacramento

How are we doing? What our stakeholders are saying!

“Having direct access to the plans and having someone who can come out and actually do the treatment (preventative care- FV application_ and then navigation, is life-changing for our kids and our families.”

- School Nurse

“I had a child in my office with 10 decayed teeth in her mouth and was in pain, Nothing had been done for this child since the family was unable to navigate the system by themselves. I then connected the grandmother of the child to Early Smiles Sacramento, within 4 hours, connected the child to her dentist (through Access Dental) and the child was in the dental chair the next day.”

- School Nurse

“The Early Smiles Sacramento staff have come to our staff meetings, presented to our nurses and , given out their phone numbers and the staff have used them. That same day, they (school staff) had a kid that was in massive pain and they called them(ESS). Not only have Early Smiles staff gotten them dental treatment that same day, (but) they have gotten them transportation and have been able to translate through the language line. WE have never had that kind of access for our families and children. “

- Director of Programs, School District

“In smiles for kids, we are seeing less kids for free because they now have dental homes. The plans are trying, seriously! They have stepped up and are receptive to our (stakeholders) input.

Having Early Smiles Sacramento navigate client to a dental home after screenings is great-that makes Geographic Managed Care work better.

I cannot speak more highly of them (Early Smiles Sacramento). Having representatives from the plans dedicated to this program is wonderful.

- Smiles for Kids
Sacramento District Dental Society

