



# Mid-Michigan District HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Michigan has a new law now requiring children entering kindergarten have a dental assessment by **October 31**.

## What Can School Districts Do To Help?

### NOTIFY PARENTS



Two month before school starts, send a parent notification letter home explaining MI's new Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) law and include MDHHS's Health Appraisal form. *\*We recommend including this same form in your kindergarten registration packets.*

### PROVIDE ACCESS



Work in partnership with our Mid-Michigan District Health Department's (MMDHD) Registered Dental Hygienist to schedule and offer on-site oral assessment screening days. Screenings will be completed during school hours and assist parents with not having to find or visit a dental home.

### RAISE AWARENESS



Help raise awareness about the relationship between oral health and overall health, to ensure that all children are healthy and ready for school. Dental decay is the number one childhood disease and the leading cause of children being absent or inattentive at school.

### COMPILE DATA



Encourage parents to have their kindergartner's oral health assessment completed. Collect the forms by October 31. Send the completed Oral Health Assessment Data Collection to MMDHD's Registered Dental Hygienist.

## ABOUT MI'S KOHA

Childhood tooth decay (or cavities) is the most common illness in MI children. Dental related issues prevent children from reaching their full learning potential in the classroom. To prevent this, Michigan created the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) to improve school readiness and raise families' awareness of oral health's importance.



**Poor dental health affects attendance and grades.** Children with poor dental health are nearly 3 times more likely to be absent from school.



**Poor dental health drains school funding.** The nation's Department of Education reports dental-related absences cost public schools an average of \$15+ million annually.



**We want all children to succeed.** The negative impact that absences have on learning is greatest among the most vulnerable students — low-income children and English language learners.



# GET THE FACTS



## Why was Public Act 261 signed into law?

Although fully preventable with access to a dentist and education, dental cavities remain the #1 chronic childhood disease and is responsible for 51 million missed school hours, nationally, each year. Children with poor oral health are 3 times more likely to miss school due to pain and infection linked to dental cavities. Tooth decay is a significant public health problem in Michigan. More than 1 in 3 Michigan Head Start children (35%) has already experienced tooth decay, almost 1 out of 4 Head Start children (22%) in Michigan have untreated tooth decay (MDHHS, 2018). Students in Michigan need healthy teeth and to be pain free to ensure they can achieve their highest individual learning potential while in school. The Michigan Dental Association and other advocates helped promote the passage of the bill.

## What will happen with the data collected on the MDHHS Health Appraisal form and how will this help students in Michigan?

The law states that it is a requirement for school administrators to submit a summary of any dental reports to the MDHHS on a form provided by the department. In Public Act 87 of 21, Section 620, funds are allocated for a dental oral assessment database, however Michigan's database is still in the development stages. Once launched, the database will help implement the dental oral assessment program. Both our health department and MDHHS will provide more information, including training, as the database is developed and implemented.

## How can your school assist with this law?

In collaboration with us, your local Health Department, we'll work together to schedule on-site Oral Health Screening days. Screenings will be completed during school hours and offer convenience to parents and caregivers. If a day is chosen outside of a normal school day/hours, parents will need to be encouraged to bring their child to the school to have their screening completed on-site (i.e., Kindergarten Round Up, Back to School Nights, community events hosted by the school, etc.). Our Mid-Michigan District Health Department can also host an event at one of our various Health Department locations specific for school dental screenings.

## What if a parent or caregiver does not have a dentist and asks how they can get the screening done?

Help guide parents and caregivers in the knowledge that Mid-Michigan District Health Department provides full opportunities to complete the required KOHA right on-site or during special events. We also offer a partnership with My Community Dental Centers (MCDC). MCDC ensures healthy mouths, regardless of insurance status and income. Parents can learn more at [mmdhd.org/dental-care](http://mmdhd.org/dental-care). You can also consider assisting families with enrolling their student in Michigan's Healthy Kids Dental program by visiting their website at [www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/healthcare/childrenteens/hkdental](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/healthcare/childrenteens/hkdental). You can also encourage parents to visit our online dental page ([mmdhd.org/dental-care](http://mmdhd.org/dental-care)) where they can find help in selecting a local dental home under our community resources guide.

#HEALTHYSMILES

## Ready to schedule your school's KOHA?

Contact our Mid-Michigan District Health Department's Registered Dental Hygienist.

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MORE INFO

