



Have You Heard?

Michigan passed a law to ensure kids enrolling into their first year of school have an oral health assessment prior to starting school.

Dental-related problems prevent kids from reaching their full learning potential. To prevent this, Michigan created the [Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Program \(KOHA\)](#) to improve school readiness and raise families' awareness of the importance of good oral health.



Children's oral health is a key public health priority. Ensuring that kids have access to dental care will help children succeed.



Poor dental health affects attendance and grades. Kids with poor dental health are 3x more likely to miss school because of dental problems.



Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in children. Almost half of Michigan Head Start children have tooth decay and close to one-third have untreated decay.

What Should School Districts Do?

- 1 **Notify** parents of KOHA by providing information in registration packets or parent letters.
- 2 **Communicate** the importance of oral health; **encourage** parents to have their child's dental assessment completed
- 3 **Collaborate** with the local health department to offer on-site screening events.
- 4 **Compile** and submit required school screening data to MDHHS.

Common Questions

How will students benefit from having a dental oral health assessment?

Students will benefit from having an oral health assessment because it will identify those who may have dental-related issues and connect them to needed care. Oral health problems can cause pain and make it difficult for children to eat, speak, sleep, or even socialize, all of which can prevent children from reaching their full learning potential.

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

The screening can be done through the local health department or screening event such as Kindergarten Roundups, back to school events, etc. You can also contact the local health department for help finding a dental home for a family if they do not have one. Consider assisting families with enrolling their student in *Michigan's Healthy Kids Dental* program, by visiting: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/healthcare/childrenteens/hkdental>

How can our school assist with this law?

Schools should consider working with the local health department or contracted dental provider to offer on-site screening events and should notify parents of KOHA through various distribution channels such as parent letters, registration packets, and social media. Schools can also assist by encouraging parents to have their children screened, providing information on where the screenings can be done including any dates and times of school-sponsored events, and raising awareness among children and families about the importance of good oral health. School districts are required to submit screening data to MDHHS by November 1st of each year, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.



Who can I contact for more information?

Contact your local health department or the MDHHS KOHA program consultant:

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