

# PICture This

Programs and Policies  
Affecting Today's Families

**O**ral health is an important issue for children, families and communities. A child's oral health impacts life at home, school, meals and play.

### What is oral health?

Oral health is more than teeth. Oral health also includes the mouth, face, nutrition, speech, chewing, swallowing, appearance, well-being, and confidence.



Families don't have to wait until the baby's first tooth arrives to start thinking about oral health. Practicing healthy oral habits should happen as early as infancy.

Bright Futures in Practice- Oral Health is a publication that offers an excellent overview for families and professionals on oral health. To view online visit [www.brightfutures.org/oralhealth/about.html](http://www.brightfutures.org/oralhealth/about.html).

Bright Futures Family Pocket Guide: Raising Healthy Infants, Children and Adolescents also has great tips for families from birth to adolescence. Visit [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org) to view the pocket guide.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentists offers helpful hints for families on topics from thumb, finger and pacifier sucking to teenagers' diets and snacking. Visit their web site at [www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org) and click on "media information." A listing of pediatric dentists in your area is also available through this site.

Otro informacion en espanol vaya a [www.nidcr.nih.gov/health/spanish/index.asp](http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health/spanish/index.asp). Otro sitio web es [www.novanet.co.cr/dentistas/saluddental/presentacion.html](http://www.novanet.co.cr/dentistas/saluddental/presentacion.html)

### What are the challenges for families?

Aside from the obvious such as getting their children to brush their teeth, thumb sucking, and eating right, there are other issues some families face:

- Families may not be familiar with new dental procedures and treatments that weren't around when they were young.
- Experiences and beliefs about oral health vary among cultures (especially for immigrants).
- Cost and coverage may be barriers to care that include: high costs of care, co-pays, lack of information about how to get services covered, red tape and delays in determining what is covered, pre-approval process, etc.
- Some providers don't accept Medicaid or certain dental plans.
- Family-centered care in some, but not all dental practices
  - understanding families' roles in day to day care and special situations, providing information to families, offering support for children and families.

### What are issues for families of children with special health care needs?

In addition to the challenges affecting all families, the following are issues families with children with special health care needs (cshcn) may face:

- Modification and appropriate accommodations of dental offices for children with special needs.
- Staff attitudes and comfort caring for cshcn.
- Staff training to address information, support, and specific treatments for cshcn.
- Coordinating dental appointments and care with other health care appointments and therapies.
- Appropriate recommendations for using anesthesia during procedures that might not otherwise require it.
- Costs for oral health treatments, equipment and supplies, in addition to other regular health care costs.
- Communication and coordination of all health and oral health providers in order to provide quality, family-centered care.

Families and professionals can visit the National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse for more information about caring for a patient with special needs. Visit [www.nohic.nidcr.nih.gov/](http://www.nohic.nidcr.nih.gov/) for more information.

### How can families get involved?

Families are their children's first and best advocates, providing and overseeing their children's health care and development. Families can talk to friends, families, neighbors and legislators about oral health issues in their state.

Washington is the pilot state for the *Watch Your Mouth* Campaign that provides useful communication tools for families and communities to spread the importance of oral health issues. Such tools include newsletters, oral health statistics, public service announcements (PSAs), and talking points for the media and the public. Visit [www.kidsoralhealth.org](http://www.kidsoralhealth.org) to access these tools. To find out about programs in your state click on "children's oral health around the country" under "What's New" section. Families can find out about other state activities by visiting their state health department's web site and searching under the key word "oral health". Visit <http://stateprofiles.hrsa.gov/LinkPageIndex.html> for links ■

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health needs. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. With a Partners in Information and Communication (PIC) Cooperative Agreement from the MCH Bureau - DHHS, Family Voices is working to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health.

*PICture This* is a digest of articles and news clips to share with families, family organizations, and our professional partners to offer a flavor of activities going on in the maternal and child health (mch) community. We hope to encourage flourishing partnerships! ■

## Partners...

### The National Governor's Association (NGA)



is the collaborative voice of the nation's governors. NGA's aim is to develop communication across states about innovative state programs and policies, and to jointly influence developing national policies. The NGA Center for Best Practices evaluates and distributes information on state policies and best practices in key areas. The Center also assists governors and state policymakers in learning about new issues and provides a forum for states to share innovative programs and solutions.

The NGA Center for Best Practices coordinates information for governors on maternal and child health topics, and assists in state-to-state communication on maternal and child health policies. It also tracks and evaluates state implementation of S-CHIP, the Child Health Insurance Program (Title XXI), and offers research to state agencies on emerging issues, challenges and successes in S-CHIP programs. Other topics covered are early childhood development, oral health and school health.

The NGA recently held its Third Annual Policy Academy on Oral Health Care for Children. The Academy invited six state policy teams, each appointed governors, to discuss programs and create strategies with other states to improve oral health care coverage and services for children within their states. Visit [www.nga.org/nga/newsRoom/1,1169,C\\_PRESS\\_RELEASE^D\\_2668,00.html](http://www.nga.org/nga/newsRoom/1,1169,C_PRESS_RELEASE^D_2668,00.html) for more information. For additional information on children's health, contact Emily Cornell at [ecornell@nga.org](mailto:ecornell@nga.org).

NGA, Hall of States, 444 N. Capitol Street, Washington, D.C. 20001 \* (202) 624-5300 \* [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org)

## Family Resource Corner

### \* Family Webguide

The Child and Family Webguide, created through a partnership between Tufts University and the Society for Research in Child Development, offers evaluations of various child and family websites. Ratings are based on content, quality and experience of site sponsors, ease of use, and site maintenance. Websites are categorized according to activities, health, education, childcare, parenting and child development. Parents can offer their own feedback, and there is a posting of family-suggested links as well. Visit [www.cfw.tufts.edu](http://www.cfw.tufts.edu).

### \* Healthy Snacks and Recipes

Looking for a healthy snack or dish to serve to your family? Visit [www.aboutproduce.com/recipes/recipe\\_search.asp](http://www.aboutproduce.com/recipes/recipe_search.asp) To access their recipe search engine to look up a main dish, side dish or snack for your family.



## What's new in research?

### Race Affects Breastfeeding Decisions



A study of 1,088 mothers shows that lack of breastfeeding may explain infant mortality and low birth weight in minority groups. Infant mortality rates are higher among infants who are black compared to whites. In the study, 65% of the mothers who breastfed were white, while only 30% black mothers decided to breastfeed their child. The study suggests that increasing breastfeeding among black women should help narrow the racial gap in infant mortality. See Forste R, Weis J, Lipponcott E. 2001. The decision to breastfeed in the United States: Does race matter? *Pediatrics* 108(2):291-296

### Snacking Trends Among Children and Adolescents

A study of 21,236 children and adolescents has shown an increase in snacking among children and adolescents. Between 1977 and 1996 there has been an increase in snacking from 77% to 91% across all ages. In addition, the snacks that children and adolescents ate were more energy dense than meals. Authors conclude the need to provide children and adolescents with less energy dense and healthier snacks. See Jahns L, Siega-Riz AM, Popkins BM. 2001. The increasing prevalence of snacking among US children from 1977 to 1996. *The Journal of Pediatrics* 138(4):493-498 ■

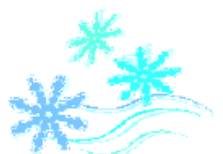
## Tidbits for the Month



**Adoption Awareness Month** November is a time to celebrate adoption and learn more about the many children in need of adoptive homes. The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse now has an online database, the "National Organizations Directory," which lists

adoption advocacy agencies, regional and national adoption exchanges, and adoptive/foster family support groups. Visit [www.calib.com/naic/database/nadd/naddsearch.cfm](http://www.calib.com/naic/database/nadd/naddsearch.cfm) for more information. ■

*Family Voices wishes  
you and your family a  
Happy Holiday!*



## Share your news with others!

We're always looking for news and activities about family organization and programs to post. Share exciting events and activities about your organization that will be interesting to others. Email Kathy Cruz Fernandez at [kcruz@fcsn.org](mailto:kcruz@fcsn.org) or fax at (617) 572-2094 with your tidbits. To subscribe to the newsletter, email or call Kathy at (617) 236-7210 ■



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