

PARTICIPATE IN THE SMILE SURVEY!

SUPPORT CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH IN WASHINGTON

Your school is invited to participate in the 2023 Smile Survey! By facilitating a screening process at your school, you will help us assess and monitor the oral health status of children in your community and across the state. Completing this survey is essential to evaluate progress made toward addressing children's oral health needs. Join us as we build a better future for all children in Washington state!

SMILE SURVEY: ESSENTIAL DATA ON CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH

The Smile Survey collects data to improve oral health for students in Washington state. Research shows that students with poor oral health are nearly 3 times more likely to miss school. Painful cavities also make children more likely to earn below-average grades. Preventing cavities helps youth stay in school and achieve academic success.

PROGRESS IN ORAL HEALTH



The oral health of Washington's children is improving as treatment of dental caries and access to preventive dental sealants increase among elementary school children.

Untreated decay declined significantly among third-graders from low-income households and among all racial and ethnic groups when compared to the 2005 Smile Survey.

Washington State is among the **top five states** in the country for the **lowest rates of decay** among third graders.

BUT DISPARITIES REMAIN



Even though dental disease is preventable, **more than half of third grade children** and about 4 in 10 kindergarteners and low-income preschoolers in Washington **experienced tooth decay.**

Significant disparities exist by income, race, ethnicity, and language spoken at home. For example, children of color in second and third grade have higher rates of decay and greater need for treatment compared to white children.

Source: 2015-2016 Washington State Smile Survey

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE SMILE SURVEY

During the survey screening process, dental providers will visit elementary schools to perform oral health screenings on children in second and third grade.

The data provides a point in time look at rates of treated and untreated decay, including rampant decay, and application of dental sealants, as well as trends over the history of the survey. These results will be used at the state and local levels to inform decisions on Washington's children's oral health programs.

Completing this survey is essential to evaluate progress made toward addressing children's oral health needs. Join us as we bend the arc of oral health toward equity and build a better future for all children in Washington State!

COVID-19 UNDERSCORED THE NEED FOR THE SMILE SURVEY

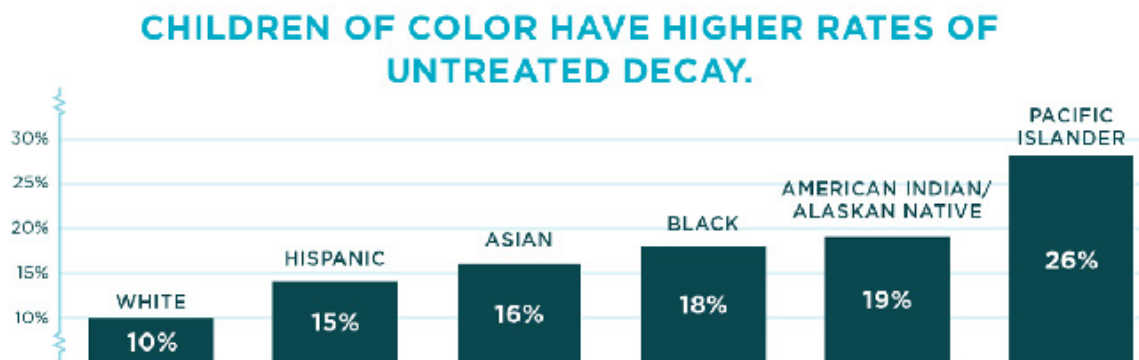
The Smile Survey was planned for 2020. The pandemic paused implementation as in-person school and childcare closed to help control the spread of COVID-19. The Smile Survey will provide much-needed insight into the current oral health status of Washington children, including the impacts of the pandemic and access to dental care and inequities.

WHY SHOULD MY SCHOOL PARTICIPATE?

Oral health is an integral part of overall health. Poor oral health can impact children's ability to learn, develop and thrive. The good news is that oral disease is preventable. Schools provide a unique opportunity to promote prevention and support children's oral and overall health. Despite progress, too many Washington kids are still dealing with preventable oral health issues. Your school's participation in the Smile Survey will help us address significant health disparities, especially for children of color.

SMILE SURVEY DATA REVEALS ORAL HEALTH DISPARITIES AND CHALLENGES

[Results from the last Smile Survey \(2015 - 2016\)](#) revealed that Washington's oral health programs are making progress. Although oral health status is improving in some areas, tooth decay is still a major health concern for children.



ABOUT THE SMILE SURVEY

The Smile Survey is a public/private partnership that includes the Washington State Department of Health, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, local health jurisdictions (LHJs), and oral health professionals, and with funding and planning support from Arcora Foundation. Usually conducted every five years, this survey provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of children's oral health across the state. To participate in the Smile Survey, please contact Dana Harris at info@SmileSurveyWA.org or (509) 948-8662 to discuss any questions and next steps for your school's participation.

Learn more about the Smile Survey
SmileSurveyWA.org