



I-Smile™ @ School

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR SCHOOL STAFF



What is the I-Smile™ @ School Program?

I-Smile™ @ School is a preventive dental program that focuses on improving the oral health of Iowa's students. The program provides dental screenings, dental sealants, fluoride varnish, and age-appropriate oral health education. Iowa licensed dental hygienists and/or dentists provide all I-Smile™ @ School services.

The Iowa Department of Public Health has provided oversight for school-based oral health programs for more than 15 years. There are I-Smile™ @ School programs in most of Iowa's 99 counties. All I-Smile™ @ School programs are held to high standards as determined by peer-reviewed research and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

How are schools selected for the program?

The program targets schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, generally those schools with rates greater than 40 percent. This allows the program to target schools with students who may have more difficulty affording routine dental care.

Why provide dental services in a school?

It is the goal of every school to promote academic success and well-being for each student. The I-Smile™ @ School program is a win-win for the school and families by providing onsite preventive services that can improve a student's oral health and overall health and success. The program reduces access to care barriers such as lack of transportation, parents needing to take time off work, and lack of insurance. It also reduces stigmas because services are offered to all students, regardless of their risk or ability to otherwise receive preventive dental care.

School-based programs are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Dental Association as a cost-effective and convenient way to prevent tooth decay in children.

What does a student need to participate in the program?

Students must have active consent from a parent/guardian to participate in the I-Smile™ @ School program. Consent forms are provided by the program and gathered by the school. Medicaid dental insurance information is collected, if applicable. There is no cost for the services, so no payment is collected.

How long are students absent from the classroom?

The amount of time a student is away from the class will vary depending on the services provided. Each "appointment" is long enough to provide quality and compassionate dental care, individualized for each child. Since the services are provided within the school, each "appointment" takes much less time than traveling to a dental appointment outside of the school.

A student receiving dental services may be absent from the classroom for 15-30 minutes. I-Smile™ @ School recognizes that this may affect some students differently than others and will work with school staff to ensure students miss the least amount of time in the most appropriate part of the school day.

How is follow-up care provided?

All I-Smile™ @ School programs will encounter children with dental needs. Program staff provide referrals for all children and will work with school staff, families, and local dental providers to ensure treatment needs are met. The goal is that all children will have access to a regular source of dental care.

Where will the services be provided in the school?

I-Smile™ @ School staff will set up mobile equipment wherever there is a private, convenient room or space that can be disinfected and is near an electrical outlet. Empty classrooms, stages, lunchrooms or other areas are most commonly used. Each I-Smile™ @ School program provides their own equipment, but may ask to use school items such as tables or chairs.

How long will program staff be at the school?

The length of time program staff will be at a school will depend on the number of students with positive consent to be served. Most programs will be completed within one to two weeks, depending on the length of the school week and other school activities. I-Smile™ @ School equipment is generally taken down and removed from the school at the completion of the program. If needed, the equipment can be moved to accommodate special school events or if there is a lapse of time between services provided.



Contact information

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