

TIPS FOR DENTAL PROVIDERS

DEVELOPING AND ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH A HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START ORGANIZATION

Head Start/ Early Head Start is a federally funded program for children. Its purpose is to “provide grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families....”

Head Start programs are for children 3-5 years of age. Early Head Start focuses on families with children 0-3 years of age. The Head Start Dental Home Initiative (DHI) is comprised of a network of dentists and mid-level providers to offer children access to comprehensive, coordinated, family-center oral health care.

Many of the Head Start/Early Head Start organizations need Dental Providers to assure they meet the following federal standards:

A dental exam within 90 days of enrollment
Tooth brushing once a day in Head Start programs

A few tips that will help you establish a positive relationship with a Head Start/Early Head Start Program

Seek to understand the barriers of Head Start parents. For example, many parents are not educated about the importance of oral health, have transportation issues, and are burdened with the many problems associated with being poor

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Offer to participate in a Head Start Health Advisory Committee, provide dental screenings and treat those children that need care

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Develop an educational program about children’s oral health to the Health and Family Coordinators at your local Head Start and/ or the parents

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Understand the Head Start/Early Head Start dental requirements

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Head Start/Early Head Start organizations are all different. Seek out the health coordinators to learn about the organization and its challenges. Be creative!!