



Health Care Reform Principles for Children's Oral Health

Foundation for Health Reform in Oral Health

The foundation for achieving oral health for all children through health care reform can only be reached if oral health is realized as an element of overall health. Given that,

- Oral health is an essential component of general health.
- Dental caries, the disease that causes tooth decay, is transmissible, infectious, and preventable.
- Tooth decay in children
 - is highly prevalent - the most common chronic disease of US childhood;
 - is trending upward – having increased 15% in young children over the last decade;
 - is consequential to daily functioning and to general health.
- Providing dental care to pregnant women is safe and necessary to reduce the transmission of tooth decay to young children.
- The foundation for oral health is established early in life by preventing tooth decay or managing dental caries appropriately.

Key Principles

Therefore, Children's Dental Health Project supports the following:

1. Affordable, comprehensive, and high-quality health coverage that includes coverage to achieve oral health for all children
2. Prevention as the most efficient strategy for avoiding costly and lifelong health and developmental consequences
3. Effective care management and professional coordination for all children and their families to achieve optimal health, including oral health
4. Efficient systems of care that integrate emerging technologies and health professionals to improve health status and eliminate disparities

Children's Dental Health Project

Founded in 1997, Children's Dental Health Project (CDHP) is a national non-profit organization with the vision of achieving equity in children's oral health. CDHP designs and advances research-driven policies and innovative solutions by engaging a broad base of partners committed to children and oral health, including professionals, communities, policymakers, and parents. We work through the lens of oral health to ensure that all children reach their full potential.