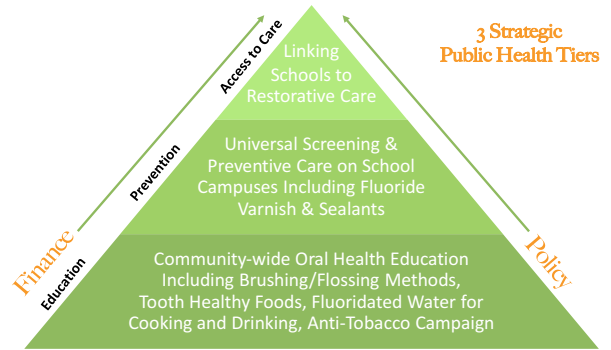


The L.A. Trust's Oral Health Initiative works to address this crucial issue in three areas:

- Providing community-wide oral health education
- Providing direct preventive care and early intervention on school campuses
- Linking school campuses to restorative care

Below are best practices relating to each of these three areas.



Community-wide Oral Health Education

Oral health education should be tailored for students, teachers, parents, and school administrators. School administrators should be contacted first to advise on the epidemic of oral disease, the leading cause of school absences, and request time for oral health education to be scheduled. Students and teachers can be engaged through classroom/auditorium presentations.

Education should include the following based on age:

- Cause and process of oral disease
- Routine use of preventive dental agents (i.e. fluoride toothpaste, floss, mouthwash)
- Need for dental check-up every 6 months
- Food & beverage: The good and the bad (i.e. fluoridated water good, sugar sweetened beverages bad)
- Oral injury prevention (i.e. mouth guards)
- Long-term effects of dental disease including finances & hire-ability
- Links to cancer, diabetes, mental health issues and other diseases
- Cause & process of Oral HPV
- Effects of tobacco/drug use on oral health

Parents should be engaged early and often to reinforce positive oral health habits. Understanding root causes of poor oral health decisions is key and can be addressed through motivational interviewing and non-judgement.

Parents should be advised:

- Baby teeth are important for healthy formation of permanent adult teeth
- Drinking & cooking with fluoridated tap water is good for teeth
- Caries are transmissible from guardian to child
- A dental home is important for routine preventive maintenance and lifelong oral health (i.e. cleaning, fluoride varnish, sealants)

Parents can be engaged through Parent Centers or School-based Committees such as:

- School Site Council (SSC)
- School Advisory Committee (SAC)
- English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) meetings
- Coffee with the Principal

Parents should be encouraged to volunteer in their school-based oral health program and become a community oral health advocates.

Universal Prevention on School Campuses

A basic level of preventive oral health care (screening, fluoride varnish, sealants, referrals) for all students. Refer to The L.A. Trust Oral Health Initiative Operations Manual for step-by-step guidelines. An ideal pilot program school site has the following:

- A high-need population (at least 50% of the children participating in the Federal Free and Reduced School Lunch Program)
- Physical space available
- Support of the administration
- Active parent volunteers
- Support from teachers
- Committed dental providers as partner

Access to Restorative Care

Ensure students have regular and adequate access to an affordable dentist in their area.

Action Items:

- Equip all school personnel with an up-to-date list of current dental providers
- Increase on-site dental restorative services (portable chairs, mobile vans, services through our Wellness Centers)
- Standardize universal data collection metrics
- Increase the number of dental providers who accept low-income and uninsured child patients
- Develop a referral updating system to track changes in oral health outcomes
- Online dental directory, accessible by anyone