



Children's Oral Health Toolkit: Sample Opinion Editorial #1: Linking to Education

The following is an example of incorporating the framing research on children's oral health into a guest editorial that links oral health to educational progress.

Making the Grade for Children's Oral Health

As principal of an elementary school, I see the promise of our future every day. So, when something that is getting in the way of learning can be easily solved, I want to do something about it. That is why my school has joined the effort to prevent childhood dental decay.

Dental disease is the single most common chronic disease of childhood, and it is one of the most frequently reported reasons that children miss school. Caused by a bacterial infection in the mouth, this disease affects nearly half of children by the time they reach the third grade. Untreated dental disease can impact a child's ability to eat, sleep and pay attention in school. The absences that occur as a result of dental disease translate into lost learning time and lost opportunities.

Fortunately, we have solutions to this widespread problem, and we know that they work. At our school, we work with a mobile dental program to offer our students access to dental screenings and important preventive measures, such as dental sealants and fluoride rinses or varnishes. When combined, these two simple interventions can prevent up to 90 percent of childhood tooth decay. If more schools were to offer such services, we could have a tremendous impact on the rate of childhood dental disease in our state and help to secure the health and educational progress of our children.

We know that when communities work together to make oral health care available to all children, we can make a difference. Please join us in speaking up for children's oral health. Together, we can do our part to ensure a healthy future.