



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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The Smile Factory – Utah Preventive Dental Program for High Caries Risk Children

In Utah, dental caries is one of the most prevalent health problems, affecting at least 86% of the population with school age children being the most susceptible. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH), Oral Health Program (OHP) developed the *Utah Preventive Dental Program for High Caries Risk Children*, with a working title of the *Smile Factory*, that coordinates the efforts of all available community resources in meeting the dental health needs of high risk children. Children and parents are provided access to the expertise of a local dentist and an educator, as well as the opportunities provided by the coordinating and consulting abilities of the UDOH. Implemented in selected elementary schools identified as having a high proportion of at-risk children, the *Smile Factory* follows a 12-month cycle and delivers four basic activities: (1) Screening and Identification, (2) Education, (3) Fluoride Supplement, and (4) Evaluation. The *Smile Factory* seeks to help high risk children and their parents take responsibility for their dental health by promoting healthy dental lifestyles and by introducing effective prevention activities such as fluoride supplements and sealants. Services begin with dental health education, followed by a dental screening, and then individual services to children at high risk for developing caries. During the 1999-2000 school year, 47 schools participated in the program and 10,200 students received basic dental health education. Over 4,000 children were screened with 801 children qualifying for the *Smile Factory* and receiving extensive individual attention. There were 2,700 fluoride prescriptions written for parents who requested it (239 *Smile Factory* children received free fluoride supplements from the UDOH contracted pharmacy). The effectiveness of the *Smile Factory* has been documented over the years. The *Smile Factory* children have typically improved their preventive behaviors as documented by an increase in the percentage of children taking fluoride supplements (0% to 32%), rinsing with fluoride mouthrinse (3% to 45%) and visiting the dentist annually (77% to 80%).

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