

KANSAS COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

ORAL HEALTH

Oral health is an essential ingredient for school wellness programs. Poor oral health affects students' overall health, their abilities to learn, and their sense of self-esteem. School districts have a wide range of opportunities to incorporate oral health in many components for students, parents, staff, and communities. Oral health issues fit into school wellness subjects such as nutrition, family and community, staff wellness, and guidance. *Kansas Pre-K – 12 Coordinated School Health Policy Guidelines* demonstrates strategies to accomplish this integration.

In addition, oral health can be incorporated into health curricula for all students as well as integrated into other curricula such as science, reading, math, and language arts. *Health Education Guidelines for Classroom Teachers* offers age-appropriate topics and strategies to enrich other subjects.

Oral health education in schools may be offered by teachers licensed by KSDE, dental professionals, health educators, and medical professionals. The classroom licensed teacher must approve the instructional materials and methods and have an ongoing, open communication with the individuals providing oral health instruction. Several oral health curricula are available to educators to ensure that the content is based on evidence based practices and classroom activities that stimulate learning. Each has its own distinct features. Some address topics for all ages of students – pre-k to 12th grade. Others include materials in Spanish as well as English. A few are available online as free downloadable materials; others have a price per copy. A list of current curricula and resources can be found in *Early Childhood and School Curricula and Resources*.

Oral health education subjects for students:

- ✓ Definition of oral health terms
- ✓ Purpose of healthy teeth
- ✓ Names and purposes of types of teeth
- ✓ Causes of dental caries (tooth decay)
- ✓ Links of oral disease to other diseases and poor quality of life
- ✓ Causes and treatment of adolescent gingivitis and periodontitis
- ✓ Evidence-based practices for eliminating or reducing caries
- ✓ Techniques of oral hygiene – toothbrushing, flossing, antibacterial and fluoride mouth rinses
- ✓ Purpose and sources of fluoride
- ✓ Nutrition and eating habits that strengthen and weaken teeth
- ✓ Oral health safety techniques and equipment
- ✓ Purpose of sealants
- ✓ Purpose and care of braces
- ✓ Effect of tobacco products on oral health
- ✓ Effects of specific prescription medicine on teeth
- ✓ Effects of illegal drugs on teeth
- ✓ Effects of oral piercing on teeth and gums