



# New Kindergarten Dental Screening Law

On December 29th, 2020, a new law was made in Michigan. This law is to help students entering school have a dental screening before starting school.

## Below are some commonly asked questions



### What do teeth have to do with school?

Dental cavities are the #1 most common childhood illness and cavities can cause pain. Cavities can prevent kids from eating and can keep Kids awake at night and both eating and sleep help kids learn. It is important to screen kids for health issues before they start school so if they do have cavities, then the cavities can be fixed and the kids will be well-rested, able to eat, and ready to learn!



### Are other screenings completed for students?

Yes, It is Michigan law that students are also screened for hearing and vision, and these are done to make sure students can see and hear in the classroom, so they are able to learn.



### Do my older students have to have a dental screening too?

This law is specifically for students entering Kindergarten, but it is highly recommended that all kids see a dentist at least once a year.



### What will a parent or guardian need to do?

The school will give you a form, called *MDHHS Health Appraisal* form, that is all about the health of your student. The form will need to be completed by professionals, such as a doctor and dentist. On the *MDHHS Health Appraisal* form, Section V- Dental Exam or Assessment is the section that will need to be completed by a dental provider.



### Is there a difference between a dental exam and a dental assessment?

In Section V of the *MDHHS Health Appraisal* form, it asks if a child received a dental exam or dental assessment. This is language specific to dental providers, a dentist completes a dental exam, and dental hygienists/dental therapists will complete a dental assessment. You only need to have one dental provider complete the screening.



### What if my student has cavities?

If you learn your student has a cavity or cavities, they will need to have the cavities filled. A cavity does not stop growing on its own, it will need to be treated by a dentist. The person who completes your student's dental screening will be able to help with appointments for follow up care.



### Who can complete Section V on the Health Appraisal form?

Any dentist, dental therapist or registered dental hygienist licensed in Michigan can complete the form



### What is a dental therapist?

A dental therapist is a newer type of provider allowed in Michigan, so they are included under the new law. However, at this time they are not many dental therapists, so you will more than likely have your student seen by a dentist or a dental hygienist.



### What if I do not have a dentist?

Contact your Local Health Department for help finding a dental provider to do the screening. The school nurse or secretary may also be able to help. The school staff members are aware of this law and will know who to contact in your community for help.



### What if I cannot afford to take my student to the dentist?

There are a variety of ways to have kids in Michigan seen by a dentist or dental professional. Consider enrolling in the Michigan's Health Kids Dental Program and contacting your Local Health Department for help finding a dental home. Michigan's Healthy Kid Dental Program: [Healthy Kids Dental Program \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.michigan.gov/healthkids)

