



ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

Tips and Tricks: **Baby Teeth Are Important**



You may have heard someone say that baby teeth are not important, because children will get another set of teeth. This is far from the truth! Here are some reasons why children need healthy baby teeth:

Function

- Pressing the tongue against the teeth helps to form sounds and words correctly as children learn to talk
- Healthy teeth allow children to chew healthy, age-appropriate foods
- Teeth hold the space until the adult tooth is ready to come in, helping to keep teeth straight
- Teeth guide children's proper jaw and facial muscle development



Health

- Untreated decay (cavities) are an infection that can spread to other parts of the body leading to other serious illnesses in the child
- Pain in primary teeth keeps children from getting enough sleep
- Pain in teeth make it difficult to eat healthy foods and can lead to malnutrition
- Decayed primary teeth continue to decay; permanent teeth are more likely to have decay



Social

- Dental pain interferes with the ability to concentrate, listen, and learn
- Pain or cavities in baby teeth keeps children from smiling, talking, or making friends



Financial Cost

- Filling cavities, pulling teeth and sedating young children for treatment is very expensive
- Additional costs to families include lost work days and transportation to the dentist