**WORD COUNT:** 229

**Header:** Oral Health and School Readiness

**Sub-header:** The Medi-Cal Program covers preventive dental services to protect children and teens smiles

**Body:** The health of your child’s mouth can affect all aspects of their life, including the ability to succeed in school. Establishing good dental care habits at home at a young age is important; however, homecare alone is not a substitute for a dental check-up.

**If your child has poor oral health, they may:**

* Miss more school and receive lower grades than children who don’t
* Develop an infection or other serious health conditions
* Have trouble eating, speaking, or sleeping due to pain
* Have low self-esteem

Having a dental home and seeing a dentist every six months is the best way to keep your child pain-free and able to focus in school.The good news is,Medi-Cal provides free or low-cost dental check-ups every six months for members under the age of 21 and once every 12 months for members 21 and older!

**Help your child have a great school year by developing good oral health habits early and schedule a dental check-up so they can have a strong and healthy smile. Don’t have a dentist? Visit** [**SmileCalifornia.org**](https://smilecalifornia.org/School-Readiness/#school-readiness) **to find a Medi-Cal dentist accepting new patients near you.**

You can also [**click here**](https://smilecalifornia.org/School-Readiness/#member-resources)for more information on Medi-Cal dental benefits and oral health and school readiness tips.