

# Benefits of Dental Care Program Shown

An increasing number of low income Iowa children aged 5 and younger are receiving early dental care as a result of Iowa's I-Smile™ program. I-Smile uses 24 dental hygienists located in public health agencies around Iowa who help coordinate dental care for children.

Through multiple health care providers, the I-Smile dental program assures children receive early and regular care, including education, screenings, preventive services, and treatment. The goal of the I-Smile program is to ensure all Medicaid-enrolled children 12 and under have a dental home.

The number of children receiving early dental care has increased by 65% since the I-Smile program was implemented in 2005. More than 47,600 children from age 0-5 received I-Smile dental services in 2009. This is an increase of 22% from 2008.

Regular dental care can keep a child's smile healthy. In addition, studies have shown that dental issues with children can lead to other health problems and well as effect a child's learning.

All children are recommended to have a dental exam by the age of 1, and regularly thereafter. The Iowa Department of Public Health's I-Smile program is working to prevent disease, help families get dental care, as well as make people aware of how important it is for children to have good oral health.

To learn more about how I-Smile is making a positive impact on Iowa children, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/oral\\_health\\_ismile.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/oral_health_ismile.asp).