

Fact Sheet



Helping kids grow up healthy and reach their dreams with dental coverage in Medicaid & the Children's Health Insurance Program

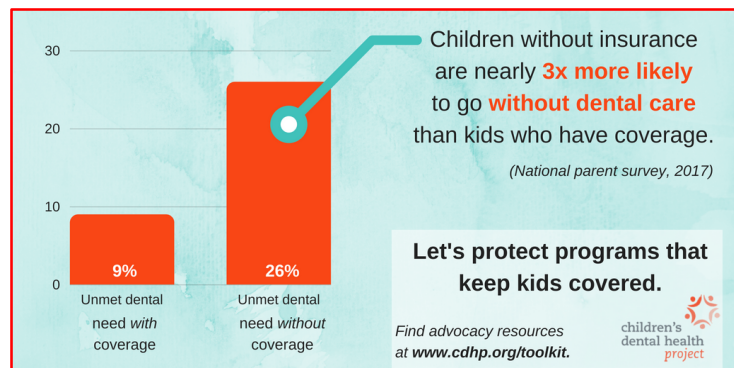
No child should be held back from their dreams due to dental disease. When kids have good oral health, they are better able to learn, grow, and achieve their potential. Dental coverage opens the door to the care children need to stay cavity-free or get treatment for a dental issue before it becomes more a painful, expensive problem. With Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), children and adolescents can count on comprehensive coverage, including dental care, which is designed to meet their unique needs in childhood.

Medicaid and CHIP both play a major role in covering America's children:

- In recent years, kids have made up about **one-half** of all people enrolled in Medicaid.ⁱ
- In FY2018, nearly **46 million children** were enrolled in medical and dental coverage thanks to Medicaid and CHIP, including 9.6 million in CHIP and 36.3 million in Medicaid.ⁱⁱ

Medicaid and CHIP child dental benefits help kids succeed in school and throughout their lives:

- Children with Medicaid and CHIP coverage are **three times** more likely to get their dental needs met, so kids can focus on achieving their dreams rather than dental pain.
- With good oral health, children do **better in school**, while kids suffering from tooth decay are **four times** more likely to earn lower grades.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Girls who grow up with good oral health earn **4.5% more** in adulthood than their peers, supporting their own family's financial security and local economies.^{iv}



Medicaid’s dental coverage for kids is designed to meet their unique, comprehensive needs:

- Children and adolescents enrolled in Medicaid get services through the **Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT)** benefit.
- At a minimum, EPSDT requires coverage of dental services for “relief of pain and infections, restoration of teeth, and maintenance of dental health,” in accordance with state benefit policies (periodicity schedule) that outlines the minimum frequency of these services.
- EPSDT also requires coverage of any services necessary to correct and ameliorate health conditions. That means children in Medicaid are eligible for truly comprehensive and individualized care, designed to meet their unique physical and oral health needs.

CHIP also covers the oral health care children need to grow up healthy:

- In states that expand Medicaid to cover children who are also eligible for CHIP, health and dental coverage is provided through EPSDT.
- In states with separate CHIP programs, states are expected to provide the dental services necessary to “prevent disease and promote oral health, restore oral structures to health and function, and treat emergency conditions.”
- These CHIP dental benefits may be based on a private insurance benchmark plan. This measure sometimes results in dollar or frequency limits on certain services and can make coverage slightly more restrictive than EPSDT.

What Congress can do:

To put children on a path toward a healthy, successful future, Congress can ensure Medicaid and CHIP remain strong and accessible. Lawmakers can protect and strengthen funding for these crucial programs, and ensure that both children and parents have access to comprehensive care that meets their needs.



ⁱ Brooks, T. & Whitener, K. (2017). Medicaid and CHIP 101: Medicaid and CHIP’s Foundational Role in Covering Kids and Families. Retrieved from <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2017/12/19/medicaid-and-chip-101-medicaid-and-chips-foundational-role-in-covering-kids-and-families/>.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2019). "Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018 Statistical Enrollment Data System (SEDS) Reporting. Retrieved from: <https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/downloads/fy-2018-childrens-enrollment-report.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Seirawan, H., Faust, S., & Mulligan, R. (2012). The Impact of Oral Health on the Academic Performance of Disadvantaged Children. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102(9), 1729–1734. doi: 10.2105/ajph.2011.300478

^{iv} Glied, S., & Neidell, M. (2010). The Economic Value of Teeth. *The Journal of Human Resources*. 45(2), 468-496. doi: 10.3368/jhr.45.2.468