

How Can Non-Oral Health Professionals Promote Child Oral Health?

Oral Health



Whole-body health

WHY IT MATTERS

Poor oral health can lead to:



Pain, infection, missed school, lost sleep



Poorer overall health



High risk of future decay

What is early childhood caries (ECC)?



Early tooth decay
before age 6 years



1+ decayed/missing/
filled primary tooth



White spots → cavities
→ infection

What increases the likelihood of ECC

- Plaque bacteria + sugar → acid
- Frequent sugar intake
- Poor hygiene
- Enamel defects
- Inequalities in access to care and education
- Systemic health conditions: cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder

Clinical Signs

- ✓ White spots
- ✓ Cavities
- ✓ Swollen gums
- ✓ Bad breath
- ✓ Tooth loss



The 5-Step Framework:

1

Ask

- Oral health history
- Hygiene routine
- Diet

2

Look for

- Dental plaque
- Red gums
- Clinical signs

3

Decide

- Is referral needed?

5

Document

- Record status, actions, and follow-up
- Monitor over time

4

Act

- Give advice
- Educate caregivers
- Support hygiene & diet
- Apply fluoride (if allowed)
- Refer to dentist

Learn More: fdiworlddental.org/educational-module-other-healthcare-professionals