

5 Steps to Promote Health Equity

SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING



1. Meet with your local schools to understand their oral health needs

- Meeting is a great first step! Health equity requires a desire to engage through cultural competency, understanding social drivers, and improving health outcomes.
 - School administrators, teachers, nurses, and parents can give you a great perspective on the needs of the students. In fact, schools are the center of improving the oral health and overall health of the students, increasing their chances of remaining in school and obtaining an education and diploma.
 - School-based oral health programs benefit from thorough planning, community collaboration, and partnerships between schools and health providers to meet the needs of students and their families.

2. Get involved and improve the overall health of the community

- Whether offering a dental screening, preventive, or referral program, getting involved in the community can be rewarding for your practice and personally!
- Utilizing resources from the [National Association of School Nurses](#), [School-based Health Alliance](#), [National Network for Oral Health Access](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) can help get you started.

3. Support a child's ability to develop life-long oral health habits

- Educating and making oral health fun supports learning and is essential!
- Getting involved with Head Start, Pre-K, faith-based, and community programs is another avenue to promote oral health beyond elementary, middle, and high school.

4. Sponsor a local athletic or sports team

- Providing athletic or mouthguards and/or sponsoring an athletic or sports team is a great way to be involved, promote oral health and injury prevention, and support your community's health.
- Remember oral health and school-based programs are not just for elementary-aged children. Adolescents are just as important as they start to find their way in life.

5. Be a good example

- Fostering a shared vision with your colleagues (both medical and dental) to promote health equity raises awareness and the necessity to be involved in optimizing student health.
- Sharing your experiences and encouraging others requires a financial, time, and social-responsibility commitment. One that is centered on leadership and integrity. Improved outcomes can be achieved by utilizing innovation, diversity, equity, and inclusion!