

# Community Coalition-Building and Identifying Qualified Children for Give Kids A Smile®

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## Partnering with Others in Your Community

Momentum for Give Kids A Smile® can be generated by state and local dental societies, dentists in private and public practice, dental schools, dental health insurance companies, and industry partners working in local coalitions. Such partnerships can:

1. Identify key access barriers in the provision of oral health care to target populations
2. Explore alternative ways to address these barriers
3. Create opportunities for community members to join together in expanding access
4. Develop a sustainable action plan for implementing local oral health care access programs for the target populations

This program aims to encourage a variety of innovative strategies for the provision of dental services to children, build on these innovations, create visionary approaches to care, and diversify collaborations to meet local goals for expanding prevention and/or treatment services. The first year of Give Kids A Smile resulted in successful, collaborative programs that included oral health education, screening and provision of restorative and other types of care.

Since a community's ability to significantly impact local oral health access issues will depend on activating and strengthening existing networks, it is important to invite significant stakeholders to participate in Give Kids A Smile. These may include members of the dental community, and other key institutions such as public health departments, the state Medicaid office, hospitals, academic institutions, schools or early childhood programs, consumer groups, social service agencies and community foundations. Through the participation and endorsement of a broad array of institutions, partnerships will stand a better chance of securing the support of potential contributors. Finding meaningful roles for partners, to optimize their buy-in and create avenues for expanded care, should be an important part of your planning process.

## Identifying Children for Your Event

A number of organizations and groups can help identify children in need of dental services and connect them with Give Kids A Smile group activities or volunteers, including:

- Boys & Girls Club
- Head Start centers
- Social service agencies
- United Way chapters
- Faith-based groups in the community
- Public health agencies
- School nurses
- Hospitals

In addition to local agencies, some national groups can help you connect to chapters in your area that can help identify children.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America: B&GCA has identified improving oral health as one of their most important priorities. Many of the 3,700 Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide may be interested in participating in Give Kids A Smile. More than 1,000 Clubs have already conducted some level of oral health educational, screening or treatment. Some Clubs also have on-site dental clinics.

To locate a Boys & Girls Club in your area to discuss joint activities for Give Kids A Smile day visit [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org).

You can also call 1-800-854-CLUB to locate a local Club.

- Select "Find a Club".
- Type in your zip code or another nearby zip code.

A list of Clubs and contact information will appear for the zip code requested.

*Tips for contacting a Boys & Girls Club:*

- When calling the Club, the best time to reach the programming staff is late morning or early afternoon before school ends.
- Ask to speak with the Health & Life Skills program director, or if not available, the person in charge of educational programming.
- Explain your event to the programming director. Ask if they are interested in bringing their members to your event or practice or holding an event at their Club.

National Head Start Association: Head Start is a federally funded and administered early childhood development program, which serves low-income children (from birth to age five), pregnant women, and their families. You can find a Head Start program in your area by using the Head Start Bureau's Web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb>

For more information, visit [www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org), the Web site for the National Head Start Association, the membership organization representing Head Start directors, staff, parents, children and friends.

United Way of America: Each United Way has a network of relationships with social and health service agencies, local government and business through which children with unmet oral health needs can be identified. United Way may play a role in transporting children to points of treatment or assisting with other volunteer capacities. To contact your local United Way, visit <http://www.liveunited.org/myuw/local.cfm> and enter your zip code.

School Sealant Programs: Several health department dental divisions operate dental sealant programs that serve schools in which the majority of children are from low-income families (eligible for federal school meals). Many sealant programs use portable or mobile equipment on the school grounds or refer children to local dental Medicaid providers. Go to [www.astdd.org](http://www.astdd.org) to find contact information for state public health dental programs. A guide was developed by the National Maternal and Child Resource Center ([www.mchoralhealth.org](http://www.mchoralhealth.org)) as a resource for community dental sealant programs. A Dental Sealant Resource Guide can be accessed at <http://www.mchoralhealth.org/PDFs/DntSlntGd.pdf>

State and Local Dental Access Programs: Numerous dental access programs serve low-income families and persons with disabilities on the state and local level. These programs vary in size and operation. For Give Kids A Smile day, it may be practical to join forces and volunteer with an existing program. The ADA has general information on existing access programs sponsored by dental societies, health departments, dental schools and community services groups. To inquire whether there are existing dental access programs in your area, e-mail [gkas@ada.org](mailto:gkas@ada.org).