

Abstract

Tooth decay is the most chronic common condition in childhood in the United States (CDC, 2017). One in five children ages five to 11 have had a least one untreated decayed tooth (CDC, 2017). The state of California has recognized the importance of oral health of school age children. On September 22, 2006, the California Governor signed Assembly Bill [AB] 1433 stating that schools must send notification of the new oral assessment requirement to parents or legal guardians (CDA, 2017). Effective January 2007, children attending public school must submit proof of an oral assessment performed by a licensed or registered dental health professional by May 31, before entering the first grade (CDA, 2017). The purpose of this project was to increase oral health of schoolchildren through assessment compliance among kindergarten students in a Southern California school district. The school nurse plays an essential role in providing support, education, and referral for children and their families. Thirteen school nurses received an oral health education toolkit to reinforce oral health hygiene and the requirements of California law AB-1433. Eighty five percent of the participants answered the 20 multiple choice questions with a score greater than 75%. A school-based dental clinic was implemented at one elementary site with approximately 165 enrolled kindergarten students. At the start of the 2018-2019 school year at this project site, 160 kindergarten students (N=160) were enrolled and one hundred percent of kindergarten students were missing the oral health screening. By August 31, 2018, 86% of students turned in a completed oral health assessment form. The results of this project provide support for the establishment of school-based programs within school nursing and in outside school districts.

Keywords: oral health, school health, students, school nurse, kindergarten