

Forsyth

ForsythKids School-based Oral Health Program

ForsythKids confronts one of today's most pressing oral health challenges: delivering effective oral health care to children at risk of decay who have limited access to care. The goal of the program is to increase access and improve health, while creating a model that can be replicated in any community.

The ForsythKids program provides children in underserved Massachusetts communities with high-quality preventive dental care and oral health education.

How It Works

ForsythKids works by going where the children are — in schools, and in some cases community centers and summer camps. It began in 2003 as a pilot program in Boston, Hyannis and Lynn, where low-income populations face many barriers to accessing dental care. Today, ForsythKids serves thousands of children throughout eastern Massachusetts.

The ForsythKids staff of specialized dentists, licensed hygienists, and dental assistants set up care facilities in the schools using portable and disposable equipment. All children in the elementary schools are eligible to participate in the program. The program is designed to fill the gap in dental care for at-risk children and ensure that they get prevention as early as possible. The ForsythKids team visits schools three times per year to maintain ongoing dental care.

Each child receives a dental exam and is diagnosed by a licensed dentist. They also receive a dental cleaning, pit and fissure sealants, fluoride varnish and temporary fillings if needed. A parent report is sent home to inform the parent of the findings. Those children with decay and/or other identified problems will be referred for treatment and followed up for 30 days to make sure that they have found a dental home in their community. A list of referral numbers in case of emergency is also provided. The program features oral health education and materials — including toothbrushes and toothpaste — for the children, as well as information for them to take home to their parents.