

# Annual Oral Health Report



December 14, 2017

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## Purpose

To provide information about the findings of the Health Unit's school-based dental screening program from the last school year: September 2016 to June 2017.

## Methodology

Publicly funded elementary schools and three private schools participated in the school-based dental screening program. Students in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Grade 2 at publicly funded schools were screened in accordance with the Oral Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol of the Ontario Public Health Standards.

Based on the screening results of the Grade 2 students at each school, the school was categorized into the following levels of screening intensity: "Low", "Medium", or "High", as per the Protocol. Increased screening intensity level requires that additional grades be screened.

The parents of the students in these grades who decline to have their children screened advise their school administrators who then pass this information on to Health Unit staff. Children whose parents have consented to screening but who are absent on the day of screening may be screened on a subsequent screening day.

Student level data was collected by six Registered Dental Hygienists employed by the Health Unit. The need for and urgency of dental care was recorded and parents were advised during the required follow-up. As well, indicators of previous dental caries were recorded. Data was collected and stored in accordance with the Oral Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Oral Health Information Support System was used to generate summary statistics from the student level data. Historical aggregate data was accessed from archived Health Unit spreadsheets. These data were further analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

## Key Findings

**Participation.** Of the 19,569 students who were offered dental screening at the schools that participated in the school-based dental screening program, 15,735 or 80% were screened (Figure 1). For the 2016-2017 school year, the Health Unit did not have parental consent to screen 2,740 (14%) students, and 1,094 (6%) were absent on the day(s) that staff were screening at their

schools. The percentage of absent and excluded students is similar to the previous year's percentage.

**Screening intensity.** Among the 131 elementary schools with Grade 2 in the Health Units jurisdiction, 89 (68%) were categorized as Low intensity, 24 (18%) as Medium intensity, and 18 (14%) as High intensity as per the Oral Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol which is described in the sidebar (Figure 2).

**Dental caries.** The percentages of Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Grade 2 students screened who were caries-free, (i.e. have never had tooth decay or the removal or filling of a tooth because of caries) were 77%, 68%, and 57%, respectively (Figure 3). These percentages are similar to the previous school year which were 76%, 68%, and 57% respectively. Seven percent of Grade 2 students screened had two or more teeth with tooth decay (Figure 4).

**Urgent dental needs.** One thousand seven hundred and fifty-one (1751) students or 11.1% of those screened were found to have urgent dental needs which deemed them clinically eligible to receive Healthy Smiles Ontario Essential and Emergency Care funding for their dental care (Figure 5). The percentage of students found to have urgent dental needs is almost double than the previous school year's. The eligibility criteria of the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program changed in 2016 and therefore more students qualify for the program. To date, most students found to have urgent dental needs were referred to local dental offices for treatment. Most students began treatment, and the few cases that have not are monitored to ensure treatment begins shortly.

## Next Steps

- The Health Unit will continue to increase the capacity of the school-based and daycare-based fluoride varnish programs to address the percentages of students who are caries-free.
- The Health Unit continues to work with elementary schools to promote awareness of the dental screening program and assist eligible children to enroll in the Healthy Smiles Ontario program.

## Results

Figure 1. Percentages of students screened, absent and refused by school year.

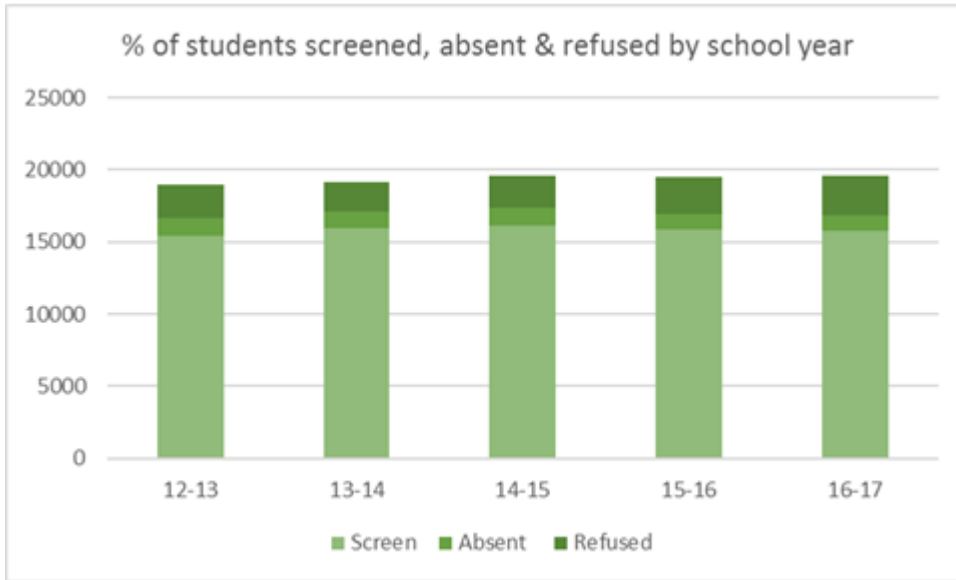


Figure 2. Screening intensity of schools by school year.

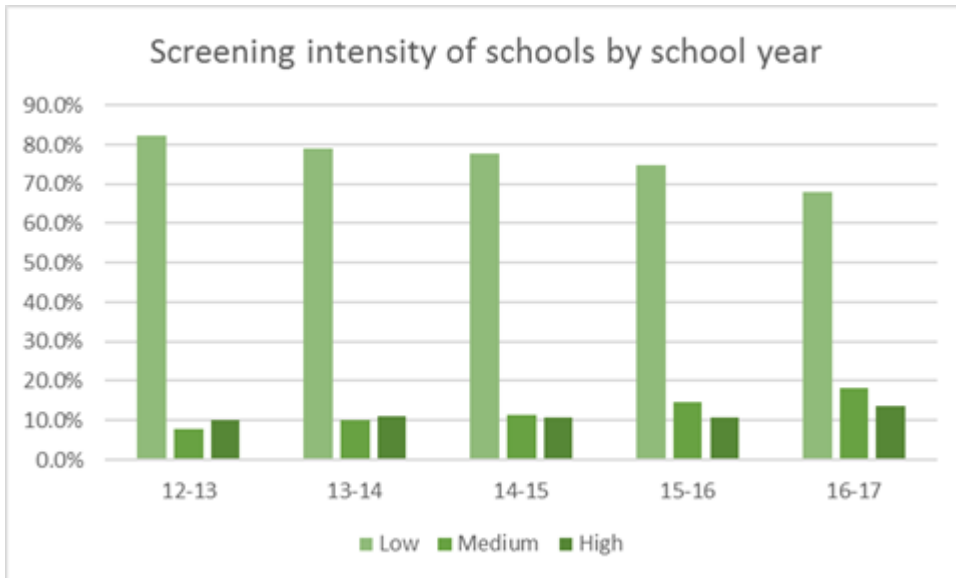


Figure 3. Percentage of students screened who were caries-free by grade.

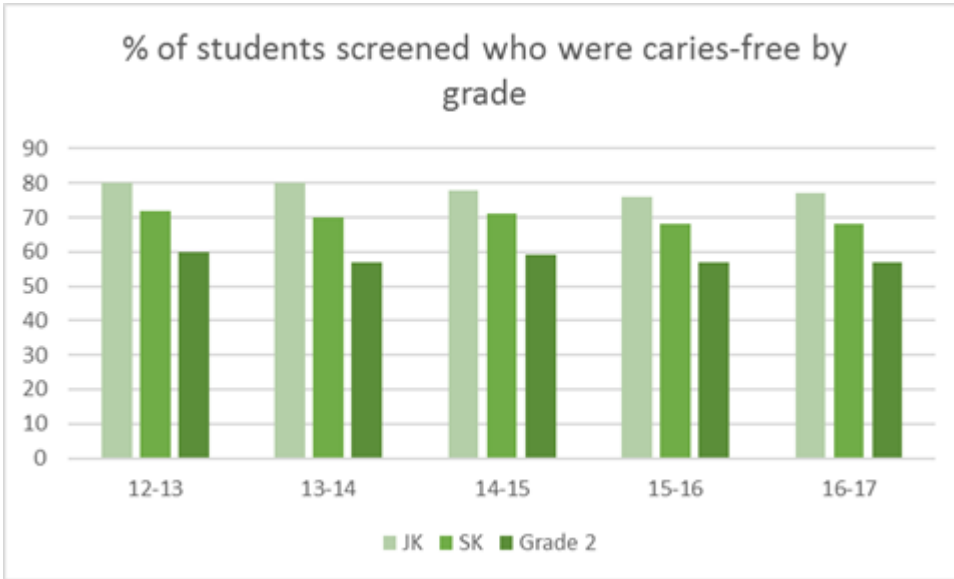


Figure 4. Percentage of Grade 2 students screened with two or more teeth affected by caries (decay, removals, or fillings) by school year.

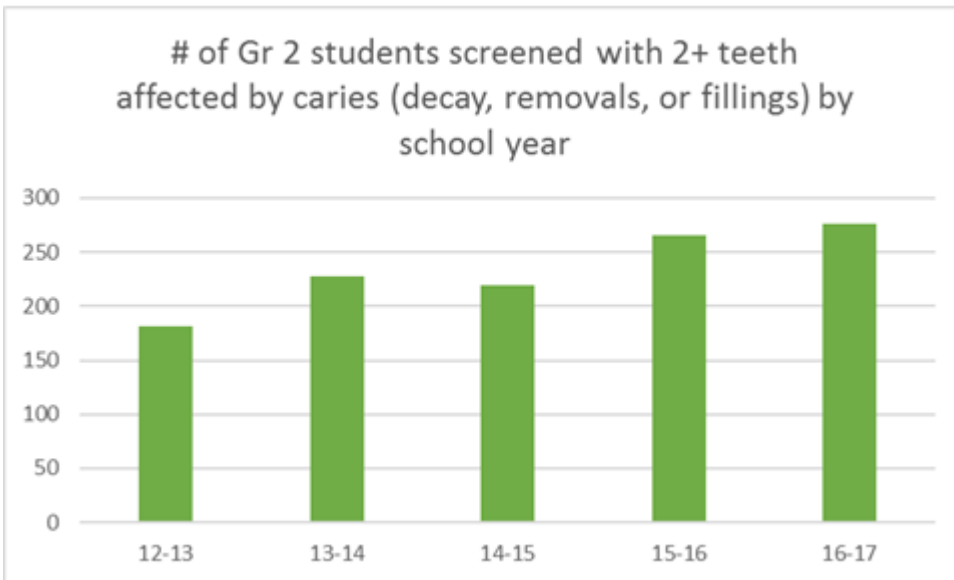
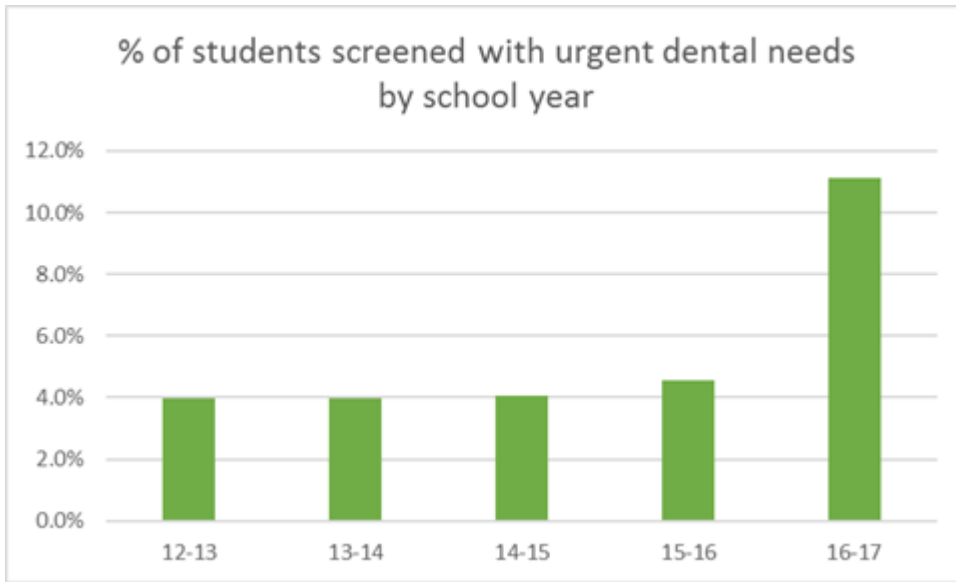


Figure 5. Percentage of students screened with Urgent dental needs by school year.



Note: The eligibility criteria of the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program changed in 2016 and therefore more students qualify for the program.