ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PUBLIC HEALTH REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST

School Dental Hygiene Programs are specialized areas of dental care by registered dental hygienists that advance the oral health of a student that contributes to the well-being, academic success, and lifelong achievement of students. To that end, school dental hygienists facilitate positive student responses to normal oral development; promote health and prevention; intervene with actual and potential oral health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for regular dental care through the establishment of a dental home.

The role of the school dental hygienist will vary depending on individual needs of local school districts to facilitate the educational process by removal or modification of oral health related barriers to student learning. Listed below, but not all inclusive, are examples of roles and responsibilities of the nurse in the school satellite clinic.

1. Assure that policies and procedures adhere to legal and regulatory statutes and ethical standards of dental hygiene practice.
2. Along with school nurses and other school personnel, establish and maintain a dental program that emphasizes oral assessment, preventive services and a referral system that results in care being completed for the child with dental needs beyond the scope of a school-based public health dental hygiene program.
3. Serve on advisory committees/consultation for individual health care plans, as appropriate.
4. Make appropriate referrals based on dental assessment of the oral cavity and its development.
5. Coordinate and assist with mandated oral health screenings, and referrals according to state and school policies.
6. Promote oral health education and anticipatory guidance
7. Serve as a liaison between the LHD, school, family, local healthcare providers and community.
8. Provide emergency care in the event of dental injury.
9. Data collection for Department of Education mandated reports related to health services.
10. Provide staff educational in-services, as requested by school administration.
11. Obtain parental consent for preventive oral health services.
12. Serve as a resource for students and staff related to oral disease and chronic oral conditions in students.
13. Serve in a leadership role for health, policies and programs, and promote a healthy school environment.