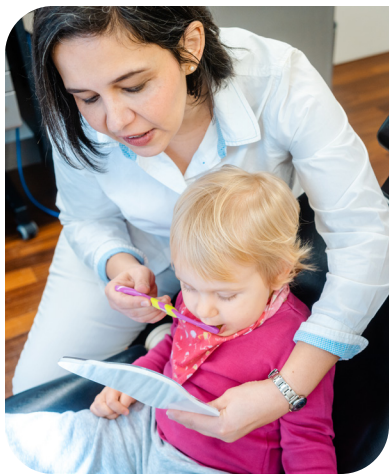


Promoting Oral Health Literacy

A Resource Guide



Prepared by
Ruth Barzel, M.A.
Katrina Holt, M.P.H., M.S., R.D., FAND

Cite as

Barzel R, Holt K (eds). 2024. *Promoting Oral Health Literacy: A Resource Guide*. Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center.

Promoting Oral Health Literacy: A Resource Guide
© 2024 by National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, Georgetown University

This publication was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an annual award totaling \$1,325,000 with no funding from nongovernmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, or endorsement by, HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. government. For more information, please visit www.HRSA.gov.

Permission is given to save and print this publication and to forward it, in its entirety, to others. Requests for permission to use all or part of the information contained in this publication in other ways should be sent to the e-mail address below.

National Maternal and Child Oral Health
Resource Center
Georgetown University
E-mail: OHRInfo@georgetown.edu



More than 25 years serving the MCH community

Contents

Introduction	4
About This Guide	6
Acknowledgments	7
Materials	8
Policy	9
Professional Education, Tools, and Training ...	11
Program Development.....	14
Public Education	15
Organizations	18



Introduction



Health literacy means that people are able to find, understand, and use health information and health care. Health systems are complex, and health information is often difficult to understand, but there are ways to make it easier for people to comprehend. Health literacy provides the foundation for oral health literacy.¹

To maintain their own health and the health of their families and communities, people rely on accurate, current, and accessible health information. The information may be provided in a variety of ways, including in a discussion between a person and a health professional and in a resource (e.g., consent form, handout) that a health professional shares. Yet millions of people cannot understand and/or act upon this information.²

Healthy People 2030 has elevated the importance of health literacy by declaring it a foundational principle and overarching goal. Healthy People 2030 defines health literacy as follows:³

- Personal health literacy is the degree to which people have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.
- Organizational health literacy is the degree to which organizations equitably enable people to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

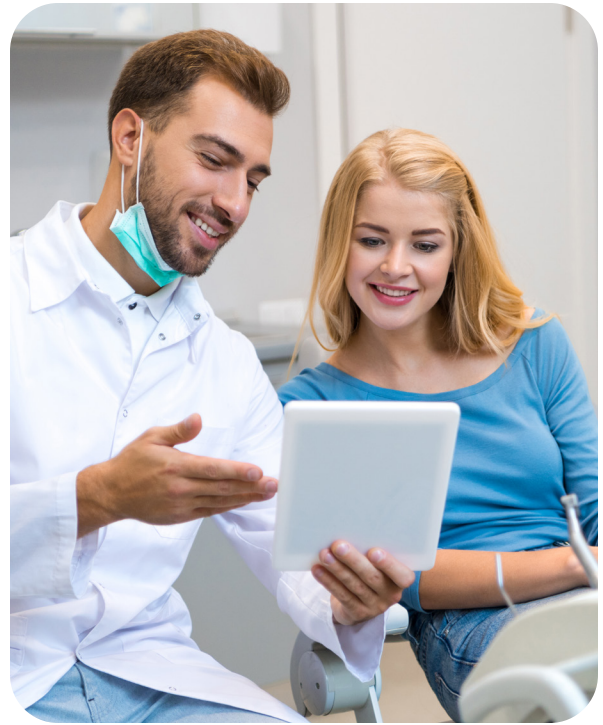
Efforts to improve personal health literacy and organizational health literacy can help people move from finding health information to understanding and acting upon it. Adopting health-literacy approaches benefits everyone, especially people with low literacy levels and people who speak English as a second language. But anyone can have difficulty understanding health information.

Clear communication between health professionals and patients can improve oral health literacy, particularly if health professionals listen respectfully and make information easy to understand. Health professionals can improve oral health literacy by using proven strategies, such as answering patients' questions using simple language and testing written draft materials with the intended audience. Health professionals can also use these strategies to encourage people to engage in discussions about oral health procedures and treatment to promote oral health literacy. Checking to make sure people understand the information is also important. This enables people to make oral health care decisions based on their values, goals, preferences, and circumstances. Being oral health literate can help people make informed decisions to improve their oral health and thus their overall health.³ Achieving societal health literacy will require developing sources of easy-to-understand information aligned with the best scientific evidence available.⁴

Findings from health literacy environmental scans have identified clinic characteristics and health professional practices that can be used to make oral health settings more user-friendly and health literate.⁵ By adopting a definition for organizational health literacy, Healthy People 2030 acknowledges that personal health literacy is contextual and that producers of health information and services have a role in improving health literacy.

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2000. *Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
2. Institute of Medicine Committee on Health Literacy; Nielsen-Bohlman L, Panzer AM, Kindig DA (eds.). 2004. *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
3. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. No date. *Health Literacy in Healthy People 2030* [webpage].
4. Kleinman DV, Horowitz A, Atchison KA. 2021. [A framework to foster oral health literacy and oral/general health integration](#). *Frontiers in Dental Medicine* 2(article 723021):1–8.
5. Horowitz AM, Maybury C, Kleinman DV, Radice SD, Wang MQ, Child W, Rudd RE. 2014. Health literacy environmental scans of community-based dental clinics in Maryland. *American Journal of Public Health* 104(8):e85–93.











About This Guide

The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center (OHRC) developed this publication, *Promoting Oral Health Literacy: A Resource Guide*, to provide information for health professionals, program administrators, educators, and others about oral health in schools.

The resource guide is divided into two sections. The first section of the guide describes materials, such as briefs, fact sheets, guidelines, manuals, papers, reports, and videos, published from 2020 through 2024 that reflect current science and practice, as well as seminal (i.e., very important or influential) materials published before 2020. In the materials section, each resource includes an icon to help readers quickly identify types of materials. The key to the categories appears on the right.

For further information, we encourage you to contact the organizations, including federal agencies, national professional associations, and resource centers, listed in the second section of the guide. Your state and local departments of health, state and local oral-health-related associations and societies, state and local oral health coalitions, and university-based libraries are additional sources of information.

OHRC will update the resource guide periodically, and we would appreciate hearing from you if you know of any relevant resources that are not included in this edition.

	Assessment (questionnaire, readiness assessment, survey)
	Book
	Brief, paper, or report
	Curriculum (course, training)
	Guide or guidelines (pocket guide, practice guidance manual, resource guide, training guide, user guide)
	Infographic or poster
	Tool (brochure, checklist, flipbook, flipchart, form, handout, tip sheet, toolkit)
	Video

Acknowledgments



We are grateful to the following National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center staff members for assistance in the development of the guide: Katy Battani, Sarah Kolo, Beth Lowe, and Susan Lorenzo. We also appreciate Alice Horowitz's contribution to the development of the guide and her leadership in expanding the focus of the health literacy field to include oral health. We would also like to thank those who submitted items for inclusion in the guide.



Materials

Materials

Policy



Disconnect: The Gap Between Patient Experience and Provider Assumptions—An Impact Story

This paper examines four barriers to accessing oral health care in Richmond, Virginia, that the Community Partners in Oral Health identified: (1) cost of oral health coverage and care; (2) availability of care; (3) issues related to culture, language, and health; and (4) health literacy and awareness about care options. To overcome each barrier, strategies at the community, clinic, public health system, and policy levels are listed.

Community Partners in Oral Health. 2022. *Disconnect: The Gap Between Patient Experience and Provider Assumptions—An Impact Story*. Glen Allen, VA: Virginia Health Catalyst. 13 pp.



Health Literacy Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Programs

This report offers guiding principles that can help Head Start staff promote health literacy in their programs. The report focuses on seven core concepts: capacity, content, equity, dissemination, feedback, practice, and evaluation. Programs can use the principles to increase their capacity to implement health-literate practices and evaluate the principles' effectiveness.

National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. 2023. *Health Literacy Guiding Principles for Early Childhood Programs*. Waltham, MA: National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. 4 pp.



Improving America's Oral Health Literacy: Leveraging Lessons from Health Literacy to Elevate America's Understanding of Oral Health

This paper examines the ways that health literacy affects (1) patients' decision-making about their oral health, oral health care, and dental insurance; (2) oral health professionals' communications with patients, staff, and the community; and (3) dental insurance companies' development and provision of dental insurance plans. It discusses health literacy in dental practices, health literacy training, and social determinants of health and oral health.

Atchison KA, Horowitz AM, Holland ND. 2020. *Improving America's Oral Health Literacy: Leveraging Lessons from Health Literacy to Elevate America's Understanding of Oral Health*. Washington, DC: Delta Dental Institute. 17 pp.



Integrating Oral and General Health Through Health Literacy Practices: Proceedings of a Workshop

These proceedings summarize presentations and discussions from a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine workshop held on December 6, 2018. Topics include integration of oral health care, primary care, and health literacy; systems thinking, integration, and health literacy; health literacy and care integration; exploring pathways to integration; developing a research agenda for integration; and reflections on the workshop.

Olson S, Wojtowicz A, Rapporteurs; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Roundtable on Health Literacy. 2019. *Integrating Oral and General Health Through Health Literacy Practices: Proceedings of a Workshop*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. 102 pp.



Integration of Oral Health and Primary Care: Communication, Coordination and Referral

This paper discusses challenges in integrating oral health care and primary care for populations with low health literacy. It provides background on the issue and focuses on weaknesses in the areas of communication, coordination, and referral. Topics include referral networks, risk management, clinical referral guidelines, performance measures, electronic tools and integrated health records, interprofessional education and collaborative practice, research, and demonstration programs.

Atchison KA, Rozier RG, Weintraub JA. 2018. *Integration of Oral Health and Primary Care: Communication, Coordination and Referral*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Medicine. 12 pp.



A National Call to Action to Promote Oral Health

This report describes a set of five principal actions and implementation strategies to be undertaken by public and private organizations and individuals to help ensure that all Americans can achieve optimal oral health. The actions include (1) change the perceptions of oral health; (2) replicate effective programs and successful efforts; (3) build the science base and accelerate the transfer of science to practice; (4) increase workforce diversity, capacity, and flexibility; and (5) increase collaboration. In addition, the report addresses partnering for progress, the need for action plans, and next steps.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2003. *A National Call to Action to Promote Oral Health*. Bethesda, MD: National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. 10 items.



Oral Health Literacy: Workshop Summary

This report summarizes presentations and follow-up discussions from a workshop held on March 29, 2012, in Washington, DC, to explore the field of oral health literacy. Topics include the importance of health literacy; the role of health literacy in addressing oral health problems; how oral health literacy can be assessed; and experiences of effective oral-health-literacy programs, state-based initiatives, and national literacy activities.

National Academies Press. 2013. *Oral Health Literacy: Workshop Summary*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. 125 pp.



Oral Health Literacy Toolkit

This toolkit provides information and resources for implementing interventions to promote and improve oral health literacy as part of the New York State Department of Health prevention agenda. Contents include information about the magnitude of the problem, oral health literacy, and state efforts to promote and improve oral health literacy, as well as resources.

New York State Oral Health Center of Excellence. 2015. *Oral Health Literacy Toolkit*. Rochester, NY: New York State Oral Health Center of Excellence. 55 pp.

Professional Education, Tools, and Training



5 Things to Know About Health Literacy

This video discusses why health literacy is an overarching goal of Healthy People 2030 and explains what health literacy means. It also considers how organizations and professionals can improve their oral health literacy, why universal-health-literacy approaches benefit everyone, and how health professionals can use health-literacy strategies to encourage people to take part in health care decisions. In addition, it addresses how clear communication between health professionals and patients can improve health literacy and how being health literate can help people make informed decisions to improve their health.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. No date. *5 Things to Know About Health Literacy*. 1 video (2:20 minutes).



AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit (3rd ed.)

This toolkit offers evidence-based guidance to help health professionals make health information easier to understand and act on, make health care easier to navigate, and increase support for people of all health literacy levels. Contents include tools addressing the following five domains: path to improvement, spoken communication, written communication, self-management and empowerment, and supportive systems. Also included are sample forms, presentations, and assessment tools.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. 2024. *AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit* (3rd ed.). Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Multiple items.



Barriers and Solutions to Accessing Care

This paper identifies barriers to accessing oral health care and presents strategies for improving access to oral health care and oral health. Topics include oral health literacy, psychological factors related to oral health behaviors, preventing oral disease, sociocultural

perceptions of oral health, the economics of sustainable oral-health-care delivery, and educating oral health professionals about caring for people with special health care needs.

Academy of General Dentistry. 2012. *Barriers and Solutions to Accessing Care*. Chicago, IL: Academy of General Dentistry. 6 pp.



Brush, Book, Bed: How to Structure Your Child's Nighttime Routine

This guide describes a program that encourages parents to have a scheduled nighttime routine that includes helping their young child brush their teeth, reading a favorite book or two, and getting the child to bed at a regular time. Additional information and resources on oral health, early literacy, and healthy sleep for young children are included.

American Academy of Pediatrics. 2014. *Brush, Book, Bed: How to Structure Your Child's Nighttime Routine*. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics. Multiple items.



The CDC Clear Communication Index

This index is designed to help health professionals develop materials using simple language for people with limited literacy and to assess materials to determine whether people with limited literacy can understand the content. The index includes introductory questions and scored items drawn from the scientific literature on communication and related disciplines. The items represent characteristics of easy-to-understand writing. A widget that can be added to an organization's website is also available.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2023. *The CDC Clear Communication Index*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1 item.



A Framework for Equity-Centered Health Communication

This framework is designed to prioritize equitable access to basic health information and services. It discusses why equity-centered health communication is important and presents three phases in making progress toward such communication. The phases include (1) understanding the issues, (2) co-creating accessible products, and (3) implementing health communication interventions.

Communicate Health. 2023. *A Framework for Equity-Centered Health Communication*. Rockville, MD: Communicate Health. 46 pp.



Health Literacy: Confronting a National Public Health Problem

This policy statement provides information about the importance of being health literate for being healthy, navigating the health care system, advocating for one's health care needs, responding to public health alerts, and voting on decisions affecting the health of one's environment and community. Also discussed is the public's overall health literacy level. Successful approaches to improving health literacy are presented, along with recommendations for actions to further improve health literacy.

American Public Health Association. 2010. *Health Literacy: Confronting a National Public Health Problem*. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. 7 pp.



Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion

This book focuses on the importance of health literacy and on strategies to enable people to optimize their own and their families' health. Topics include definitions of health literacy, measures used in health literacy research, educational systems, health systems, and a vision for a health-literate America.

Institute of Medicine Committee on Health Literacy; Nielsen-Bohlman L, Panzer AM, Kindig DA (eds.). 2004. *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. 345 pp.



Health Literacy for Public Health Professionals

This course offers information about health literacy for public health professionals. It explains the difference between personal and organizational health literacy, discusses how efforts to improve health literacy can affect the public's health, and identifies the role of organizational health literacy in providing core public health services. The course includes three modules: front line and program report responsibilities, program management and supervisory responsibilities, and senior management and executive leadership responsibilities. It can be taken for continuing education credits.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022. *Health Literacy for Public Health Professionals*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 3 modules.



Health Literacy Online: A Guide to Simplifying the User Experience

This guide provides information on why and how to design health websites and other digital health-information tools. Topics include what is known about users with limited literacy skills, writing actionable content, displaying content clearly on the page, organizing content and simplifying navigation, engaging users, and testing a site with users with limited literacy skills. A checklist of strategies and an overview of user research are included.

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2015. *Health Literacy Online: A Guide to Simplifying the User Experience* (2nd ed.). Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 1 v.



A Healthy Mouth for Every Body Campaign Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help people learn about how to take good care of their oral health and about how oral health is connected to overall health and well-being. Tools include radio public service announcements; social media graphics; social media posts; posters; content to include in e-mails, newsletters, and other outreach materials; and educational materials. A webinar about opportunities for sharing oral health materials and integrating them into health-education efforts is also available.

Health Resources and Services Administration. 2023. *A Healthy Mouth for Every Body Campaign Toolkit*. Rockville, MD: Health Resources and Services Administration. Multiple items.

American Dental Association. 2022. *Making Health Literacy Part of Your Dental Practice: An Action Guide*. Chicago, IL: American Dental Association. 1 p.



HLE2: The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers

This tool is designed to help health organizations identify and rate health-literacy-related factors within their organization. Such factors include organizational policies, institutional practices, navigation, culture and language, and communication. A form for scoring each factor, as well as a discussion of how to interpret the scores, is included. Planning for action is also addressed.

Rudd RE, Oelschlegel S, Grabeel KL, Tester E, Heidel E. 2019. *HLE2: The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers*. Boston, MA: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. 47 pp.



Oral Health Literacy and Dental Public Health

This course provides a definition of health literacy and discusses how health literacy and oral health literacy are measured, the role of oral health literacy in promoting oral health, and access to oral health care in private practice and in public health settings. The course describes ways that oral health literacy can influence long-term oral health outcomes and how oral-health-literate approaches can be integrated into private and public health organizations.

American Association of Public Health Dentistry. No date. *Oral Health Literacy and Dental Public Health*. Albany, NY: American Association of Public Health Dentistry. 4 modules.



Improving Oral Health Literacy

This tip sheet was developed for Head Start staff to use to support the oral health of children and pregnant women enrolled in Head Start programs and their families. It focuses on oral health literacy, why it is important, and what Head Start staff can do to improve it. The tip sheet also discusses why oral health literacy is important and provides strategies to improve oral health literacy in Head Start.

Washington, DC: National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. 2023. *Improving Oral Health Literacy*. Washington, DC: National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. 1 item.



Oral Health Literacy Environmental Scan

The environmental scan consists of checklists that clinics can use to help make their services accessible to people with limited health literacy. The findings are intended to inform efforts to integrate oral health care into primary care in community health centers. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Transforming Oral Health for Families. 2020. *Oral Health Literacy Environmental Scan*. Albany, NY: HealthEfficient. 31 pp.



Oral Health Literacy Toolkit

This toolkit for oral health professionals provides an overview of oral health literacy and why it is important, as well as tools for improving dental practices' ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Resources include a guidebook, a dental-practice-assessment checklist, a tip sheet explaining the teach-back method, a brochure explaining what to expect during a dental visit, and an oral-health-literacy action plan for dental practices.

Health Research for Action. 2021-. *Oral Health Literacy Toolkit*. San Francisco, CA: California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center. 1 website.



Making Health Literacy Part of Your Dental Practice: An Action Guide

This guide provides tips on how oral health professionals can make their practices more health-literate to improve compliance with oral hygiene instructions and treatment recommendations, reduce the number of missed appointments, and minimize calls to the office. It discusses how to learn about health-literacy resources, assess a practice's oral health literacy, and effectively communicate with patients.



The Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT) and User’s Guide: An Instrument to Assess the Understandability and Actionability of Print and Audiovisual Education Materials

These resources provide a systematic method for evaluating and comparing the understandability and actionability of consumer-education materials such as brochures, medical instructions, and audiovisual aids. Contents include a user’s guide, tools for assessing printable and audiovisual materials, and a scoring form. Topics include content, word choice and style, use of numbers, organization, layout and design, and use of visual aids.

Shoemaker SJ, Wolf MS, Brach C. 2013. *The Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT) and User’s Guide: An Instrument to Assess the Understandability and Actionability of Print and Audiovisual Education Materials*. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. 4 items.

questions and the ask-tell-ask method with patients, engaging patients in agenda and goal setting, using questions and reflections while discussing patient values, and following up with patients.

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. 2021. *Using Motivational Interviewing in Dentistry Video Series*. Boston, MA: CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. 12 videos.



A Way with Words: Tips for Writing Easy-to-Understand Oral Health Materials

This handout for health professionals provides tips on how to write oral health materials that are easy for people to understand. It includes ideas about words to use and not to use, tone, voice (active vs. passive), and layout. Effectively using headings and lists is also discussed, along with the best way to write sentences and paragraphs to make the text simple and clear. How to incorporate technical words, when necessary, is explained. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Barzel R, Holt K. 2024. *A Way with Words: Tips for Writing Easy-to-Understand Oral Health Materials*. Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. 2 pp.



Using Motivational Interviewing in Dentistry Video Series

This video series highlights motivational interviewing skills and techniques that health professionals can use to encourage patients to take care of their oral health. Videos discuss using open- and closed-ended

Program Development



2022–2027 South Dakota Oral Health Coalition: Oral Health Plan

This plan was created with a vision of empowering all South Dakotans to embrace oral health as a critical component of overall health and well-being throughout life. The plan includes the following goals: improve oral health literacy and awareness of the importance of oral health; prevent oral diseases; increase the availability, accessibility, and use of oral health care; and coordinate state oral health efforts. For each goal, objectives and strategies are presented.

South Dakota Oral Health Coalition. 2022. *2022–2027 South Dakota Oral Health Coalition: Oral Health Plan*. Pierre, SD: South Dakota Oral Health Coalition. 8 pp.



CMS Framework for Health Equity 2022–2032

This framework describes the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ (CMS’s) plan to incorporate health equity and efforts to address health disparities as a foundational element across all its work. It discusses five priority areas: (1) expand the collection, reporting, and analysis of standardized data; (2) assess causes of disparities within CMS programs and address inequalities in policies and operations; (3) build capacity of health care organizations and the workforce to reduce health and health care disparities; (4) advance language access, health literacy, and the provision of culturally tailored services; and (5) increase access to health care and coverage.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. 2022. *CMS Framework for Health Equity 2022–2032*. Baltimore, MD: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. 39 pp.

Kansas Oral Health Plan 2022–2027

This plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for organizations and individuals to promote oral health in Kansas. The plan focuses on four goals related to (1) financing, (2) systems collaboration, (3) oral health literacy, and (4) the oral health workforce. Goal 4, objective 1, focuses on promoting oral health awareness in schools by providing school nurses with training and tools.

Heinrichs J, Kanakadandila K. 2022. *Kansas Oral Health Plan 2022–2027*. Topeka, KS: Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Bureau of Oral Health. 66 pp.

Oral Health 2014: Delaware—An Oral Health Literacy Strategic Communications Plan

This report provides an overview of an oral health literacy campaign in Delaware, describes the campaign's communications approach, and discusses sustainability and next steps. Topics include information about the campaign's mission; successes; challenges; impact; and levers, goals, and objectives. Additional topics

include campaign strategies, collaborative structure, partners, stakeholders, branding and identity, materials, mass media, and grassroots community outreach. Information about funding and about costs and measures of success is also provided.

GBSM. 2013. *Oral Health 2014: Delaware—An Oral Health Literacy Strategic Communications Plan*. Dover, DE: Delaware Health and Social Services, Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services. 24 pp.

Strategic Plan: Oral Health in Kentucky—2017 Strategic Plan on Oral Health

This plan provides information about ensuring the best possible oral health for Kentuckians by collaborating to build oral health equity through access to oral health care, education, workforce readiness, and effective use of resources. Topics include a survey of individuals interested in oral health in the state, data collection and metrics, dentistry as a business, interprofessional collaboration, prevention, oral health literacy, policy, emerging issues, and goals and action items.

Kentucky Department for Public Health, Kentucky Oral Health Program. 2017. *Strategic Plan: Oral Health in Kentucky—2017 Strategic Plan on Oral Health*. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department for Public Health, Division of Maternal and Child Health. 58 pp.

Public Education

Baby Teeth Care: Birth to 2 Years of Age

This tip sheet for parents and other caregivers provides information about how to care for primary teeth in infants and young children from birth through age 2. It discusses why primary teeth are important, what causes tooth decay, how to clean an infant's or young child's primary teeth, and when to wean a child from a bottle. The tip sheet is written in simple language and is available in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

Virginia Department of Health. 2017. *Baby Teeth Care: Birth to 2 Years of Age*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Health. 1 p.

Brushing Your Child's Teeth: Children Six Months and Older

This tip sheet for parents and other caregivers provides information about how to care for primary teeth in infants and children ages 6 months and older. It discusses when to start brushing an infant's teeth, how to teach a child to brush their teeth, how to brush a child's teeth and how often to brush, and how often a toothbrush should be replaced. The tip sheet is written in simple language and is available in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

Virginia Department of Health. 2017. *Brushing Your Child's Teeth: Children Six Months and Older*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Health. 1 p.



Dental Care During Pregnancy

This brochure provides information about how pregnant women can care for their teeth. It explains why it is important and safe to get oral health care during pregnancy and offers tips on how to care for an infant's mouth and teeth. The brochure is written in simple language. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

MaineHealth. 2017. *Dental Care During Pregnancy*. Portland, ME: Before the First Tooth. 2 pp.



Dental Steps for ME

This video library is designed for pediatricians wishing to integrate oral health care into well-child visits, as well as for parents. The library contains one video correlating with each well-child visit, from the 2-month visit to the age-5 visit.

Children's Oral Health Network of Maine. No date. *Dental Steps for ME*. No place: Children's Oral Health Network of Maine. Multiple items.



Fluoride Varnish: For Children Age Six Months and Older

This brochure for parents and other caregivers provides information about fluoride varnish for children ages 6 months and older. It discusses what fluoride varnish is and what it does, its safety, how it is applied, and how long its effects last. The brochure is written in simple language and is available in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

Virginia Department of Health. 2017. *Fluoride Varnish: For Children Age Six Months and Older*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Health. 1 p.



Fluoride Varnish for Adults: Q&A

This handout provides information for adults, including pregnant women, about how fluoride varnish can make their teeth more resistant to tooth decay. The handout explains what fluoride varnish is and discusses its safety. It also addresses things to avoid after it is applied to teeth, how long it lasts, how often it should be applied, and whether it is covered by dental insurance. The sheet is written in simple language and is available [English](#) and in [Spanish](#). [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. 2023. *Fluoride Varnish for Adults: Q&A*. Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. 1 p.



Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles

This series of handouts for pregnant women and parents of infants and young children provides simple tips on nutrition and oral health issues. Topics include brushing a young child's teeth, choosing healthy drinks, encouraging children to drink water with fluoride, giving children healthy snacks, taking care of oral health for pregnant women, and taking care of an infant's oral health. The series is written in simple language and is available in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. 2021-. *Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles*. Washington, DC: National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. 20 items.



Healthy Mouths for You and Your Baby

This video provides information about what pregnant women and mothers can do to promote their own and their child's good oral health and why it is important to do so. The video shows oral health professionals, pregnant women, and mothers discussing the importance of good oral health during pregnancy and infancy. Also shown are oral health professionals demonstrating oral health care for pregnant women and infants.

University of Maryland School of Public Health, Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy. 2013. *Healthy Mouths for You and Your Baby*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland School of Public Health, Herschel S. Horowitz Center for Health Literacy. 1 video (11:49 minutes).



A Healthy Smile for Your Young Child: Tips to Keep Your Child Healthy

This brochure is designed to educate parents and other caregivers about oral hygiene and oral care for infants and young children. Topics include tooth-brushing, eating healthy foods, and getting oral health care. Additional topics include the importance of primary teeth, tips to help parents keep their own mouths healthy, and finding a dentist. The brochure is

written in simple language and is available in [English](#), [German](#), and [Spanish](#). A trifold brochure in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#) is also available. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. 2014. *A Healthy Smile for Your Young Child: Tips to Keep Your Child Healthy*. Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. 2 pp.

Oral Health: Tips for Families from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

This tip sheet for parents of children enrolled in Head Start programs discusses the importance of good oral health habits for children. It provides tips for brushing teeth, helping children learn proper brushing techniques, eating healthy snacks, avoiding sugary drinks and foods, and visiting the dentist. The tip sheet is available in [Amharic](#), [Arabic](#), [Burmese](#), [Chinese](#), [English](#), [Hmong](#), [Marshallese](#), [Polish](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#), and [Yiddish](#).

National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. 2014. *Oral Health: Tips for Families from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness*. Elk Grove Village, IL: National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. 1 p.

Pregnancy and Dental Health: What You Need to Know

This postcard provides information about oral health during pregnancy. Topics include morning sickness, changes in the mouth, and the importance of eating healthy foods. The postcard is written in simple language. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Before the First Tooth. 2017. *Pregnancy and Dental Health: What You Need to Know*. Portland, ME: Before the First Tooth. 2 pp.

Smoking and Pregnancy

This brochure lists health problems for both pregnant women and their infants caused by smoking during pregnancy. It also discusses the link between smoking and periodontal disease and provides information about the benefits of quitting smoking either before or during pregnancy. In addition, the brochure explains the importance of receiving regular oral health care and how to find a dental home. The brochure is written in simple language, with English on one side and Spanish on the other.

Smiles for Children. 2017. *Smoking and Pregnancy*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Health. 2 pp.

Tips for Good Oral Health During Pregnancy

This tip sheet provides information and resources to help women take care of their oral health during pregnancy. Topics include getting care, practicing good oral hygiene, eating healthy foods, and practicing other healthy behaviors. Additional topics include taking care of their infant's gums and teeth and asking their pediatric health professional to check their infant's mouth starting at age 6 months. The tip sheet is written in simple language and is available in [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Chuukese](#), [English](#), [German](#), [Korean](#), [Portuguese](#), [Russian](#), [Samoan](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#). [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Oral Health During Pregnancy Expert Workgroup, 2012-. *Tips for Good Oral Health During Pregnancy*. Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. 2 pp.



Organizations

Organizations

ACADEMY OF GENERAL DENTISTRY

560 West Lake Street, Sixth Floor
Chicago, IL 60661-6600
Phone: (888) 243-3368
Website: www.agd.org

The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) serves the needs of general dentists, represents their interests, and provides continuing education. Information about oral health literacy is available on the academy's website. AGD's goal is to advance general dentistry and improve oral health through high-quality continuing education and advocacy.

AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY

5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
Phone: (301) 427-1364
Website: www.ahrq.gov

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ's) mission is to produce evidence to make health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable and to work within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and with other partners to help ensure that the evidence is understood and used. Tools to help health care organizations, leaders, and professionals improve health literacy, as well as other information about health literacy, are available on AHRQ's website.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60611-2637
Phone: (312) 337-2169
Website: www.aapd.org

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) works to achieve optimal oral health for children and adolescents, including those with special health care needs. AAPD serves primary care and specialty pediatric dentists, as well as general dentists who treat children and adolescents in their practices.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH DENTISTRY

136 Everett Road
Albany, NY 12205
Phone: (518) 694-5525
E-mail: info@aaphd.org
Website: www.aaphd.org

The American Association of Public Health Dentistry (AAPHD) works toward ensuring optimal oral health for individuals and communities. AAPHD's goals are to foster partnerships between AAPHD members and stakeholders with an interest in public health dentistry, translate evidence into policies and programs, and develop talent and leadership in the field of public health dentistry.

AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611-2678
Phone: (312) 440-2500
E-mail: msc@ada.org
Website: www.ada.org

The American Dental Association (ADA) promotes good oral health to the public while representing the oral health profession. ADA's mission is to help dentists succeed and to support the advancement of the health of the public. The association shares evidence-based insights that can help oral professionals provide high-quality oral care for all and advocate for public health by focusing on issues such as access to care and rules and regulations that surround the practice of dentistry.

AMERICAN DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION

444 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 440-8900
Website: www.adha.org

The American Dental Hygienists' Association works to ensure access to high-quality oral health care; advance oral health equity and reduce systemic racism; promote dental hygiene education, licensure, practice, and research; and represent the legislative interests of dental hygienists at the local, state, and federal levels.

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ORAL HEALTH SECTION

801 I Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 777-2742
Website: www.apha.org

The American Public Health Association (APHA) strives to improve the health of all people and all communities and strengthen the public health profession. APHA's Oral Health Section works to promote the importance of oral health, increase access to oral disease prevention and treatment, and monitor and disseminate information about the oral health needs of the public.

ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND TERRITORIAL DENTAL DIRECTORS

3858 Cashill Boulevard
Reno, NV 89509
Phone: (775) 626-5008
Website: www.astdd.org

The Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) supports a strong and effective government oral health presence in each state. ASTDD promotes the establishment of national public policy, assists state oral health programs in developing and implementing programs and policies for the prevention and management of oral diseases, and builds awareness and strengthens professionals' knowledge and skills by developing and sharing resources.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, DIVISION OF ORAL HEALTH

1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027
Phone: (800) 232-4636
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov
Website: www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/index.html

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) works to combat disease and supports communities and citizens to do the same. CDC's *Everyday Words for Public Health Communication* webpage offers recommendations from CDC's Health Literacy Council and other agency communicators on how to reduce jargon and improve materials' readability. CDC's Division of Oral Health strives to improve oral health and reduce oral health disparities by helping states improve

their oral health programs, extending the use of proven strategies to prevent oral disease, enhancing efforts to monitor oral disease, contributing to the scientific knowledge base related to oral health and oral disease, and guiding infection control in dentistry.

HOROWITZ CENTER FOR HEALTH LITERACY

University of Maryland
4200 Valley Drive, School of Public Health Building,
Suite 2387
College Park, MD 20742-2611
Phone: (301) 405-9435
Website: <https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy>

The Horowitz Center for Health Literacy conducts research and provides education and services to improve health literacy at the individual, family, community, organization, and societal levels. The center aims to advance health literacy in Maryland and nationwide.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DENTAL AND CRANIOFACIAL RESEARCH

30 Convent Drive, Building 30
Bethesda, MD 20892-2190
Phone: (301) 496-4261
E-mail: nidcrinfo@mail.nih.gov
Website: www.nidcr.nih.gov

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) seeks to improve oral health through research, training, and the dissemination of information and resources. NIDCR works to advance fundamental knowledge about dental, oral, and craniofacial health and disease and to translate this knowledge into prevention, early detection, and treatment strategies that improve overall health for all.

NATIONAL MATERNAL AND CHILD ORAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER

Georgetown University
37th & O Streets, N.W.
Washington, DC 20057-1272
E-mail: OHRCinfo@georgetown.edu
Website: www.mchoralhealth.org

The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center responds to the needs of professionals working in states and communities with the goal of improving oral health services for pregnant women, infants, children, and adolescents, including those with special health care needs, and their families (MCH population). The resource center collaborates with government agencies, professional associations, foundations, policy and research centers, and voluntary organizations to gather, develop, and share information and materials to promote sustainable oral health services for the MCH population.

NATIONAL NETWORK FOR ORAL HEALTH ACCESS

181 East 56th Avenue, Suite 411
Denver, CO 80216
Phone: (303) 957-0635
E-mail: info@nnoha.org
Website: www.nnoha.org

The National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) works to improve the oral health of underserved populations and contributes to overall health through leadership, advocacy, and support to oral health professionals in safety-net systems. NNOHA's priorities include ensuring that oral health care is integrated into primary care; promoting evidence-based oral-disease-management models; advocating for every health center to have an oral health program; and ensuring that oral health professionals have the information, resources, and support required to deliver high-quality services.

OFFICE OF DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION

1101 Wootton Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852
Website: health.gov

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) works to encourage people to lead healthy and active lives. ODPHP establishes and promotes national public health priorities; translates science into policy, guidance, and tools; and strives to improve health literacy and equitable access to clear and actionable health information.



National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center