
Dental Attitudes of Parents and Directors of WV Head Start Programs K. Kohli*, R. Suter, R. Crout, C. Tebay, E. Smith and S. Wearden.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate dental attitudes among the parents with children in Head Start Program in North Central West Virginia and its Directors. A survey was sent to 787 parents of children in North Central West Virginia Head Start Programs encompassing 9 counties and to the 24 directors of the Head Start Program in West Virginia. This survey asks 14-15 questions relating to dental hygiene practices, views on preventive care, and opinions on what is most important in preventing oral disease. The data collected has been tabulated and statistically analyzed. The return rate for the parent was 41% and for the directors was 71%. The responses of parents and directors were consistent in North Central West Virginia. The results indicated that 79.75% ($\pm 3.4\%$) of parents and 82.35% ($\pm 10.6\%$) of directors feel that the first dental visit should be at 2-4 years. Regarding the frequency of brushing a child's teeth, 53.89% ($\pm 4.2\%$) of parents and 41.18% ($\pm 13.6\%$) of the directors feel that they should be brushed 3 times/day. The majority surveyed, 87.85% ($\pm 2.7\%$) of parents and 94.12% ($\pm 6.6\%$) of directors, feel that tap water should be used in the bottle for nocturnal feedings. In conclusion, the dental knowledge is uniform from county to county rather than pockets of knowledge in one area and unawareness in others and that even though parents and directors are dentally aware of childhood caries and its causes, there is still a higher caries rate in WV as compared to the rest of the country.