

## Child Dental Care in California

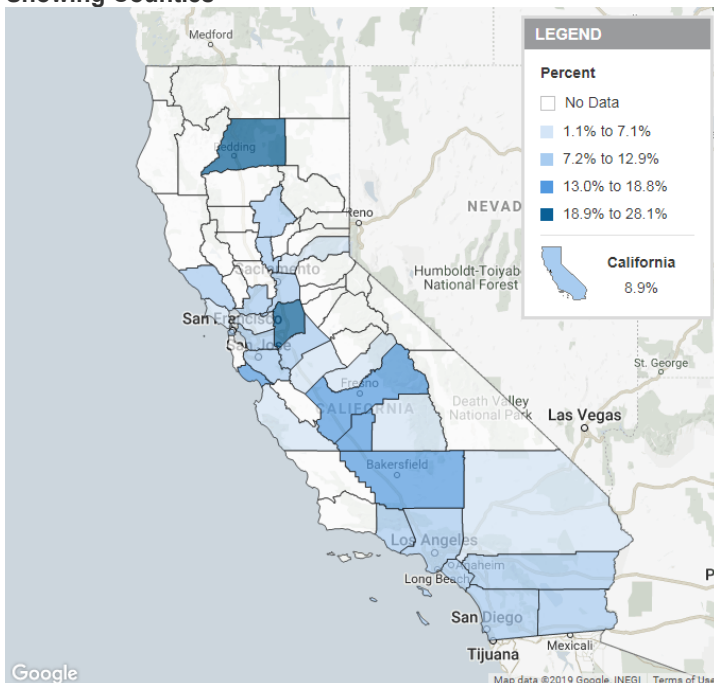
### Length of Time Since Last Dental Visit: 2013-2014

California	Percent	
Length of Time Since Last Dental Visit	Ages 2-11	Ages 12-17
Less than 6 months ago	74.0%	78.5%
6 to 12 months ago	13.0%	12.6%
More than 12 months ago	4.1%	6.8%
Never had a dental visit	8.9%	2.1%

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 2-17, by length of time since their last dental visit and by age group.

**Data Source:** UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, [California Health Interview Survey](#) (Dec. 2015).

### Children Ages 2-11 Who Have Never Visited a Dentist: 2013-2014; Showing Counties



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 2-17, by length of time since their last dental visit and by age group.

**Data Source:** UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, [California Health Interview Survey](#) (Dec. 2015).

### What It Is

Kidsdata.org presents the estimated percentage of children ages 2-11 and youth ages 12-17 by the length of time since their last dental visit.

### Why This Topic Is Important

Oral health affects overall health and is essential for healthy development (1, 2). Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease and the greatest unmet health need among children in California and the U.S. (1, 3, 4). Untreated dental problems, such as cavities and gum disease, can affect a child's health and quality of life by causing pain, loss of teeth, impaired growth, sleep and speech issues, self-confidence problems, poor school performance, and increased school absences, among other issues (1, 2, 3). Nationwide, children miss more than 51 million hours of school each year due to dental problems (3).

Tooth decay is an infectious disease that can be transmitted from mothers to their infants, making oral health for pregnant women a critical public health issue (1, 4). Problems with oral health and access to dental care disproportionately affect people of color, low-income families, those with public or no insurance, and those in rural areas (2, 3, 5). For example, children in these groups—especially young children—are less likely to receive routine dental check-ups, which are critical for preventing tooth decay (1, 2). In California, the disparity in oral health between low- and higher-income children is among the worst in the nation (4). In addition, children in California with public insurance are more likely to have oral health problems not only when compared to those with private insurance, but also when compared to those who are uninsured; this may be due to the state's low reimbursement rates for providers and other barriers to accessing care (4).

### How Children Are Faring

In 2013-14, an estimated 74% of California children ages 2-11 and 79% of youth ages 12-17 had a dental visit in the past 6 months. However, about 9% of children ages 2-11 and 2% of adolescents ages 12-17 had never visited a dentist. Among counties or regions within California, the estimated percentage of children ages 2-11 who had never seen a dentist ranged from about 1% to 28% in 2013-14.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/50/dental->



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