



Early Childhood Dental Network

Making Birth to Age 3 Oral Care a Priority to Increase Access and Raise Awareness

Tooth decay is the most **chronic yet preventable infectious disease** in children. The Foundation's **Cavity-Free: Birth-to-3** initiative, a pilot project* with Mille Lacs County, aims to help raise healthy children who are ready to learn, have decreased behavior problems and happily share their smiles!

Overcoming a Root Problem for Income-Eligible Children

For children with tooth pain, the experience can be debilitating and confusing. They typically don't know the right words to describe their pain and often act out with poor behavior. Sadly, some get so used to the pain that they do not know life without it: They go to sleep with pain and they wake up with pain.

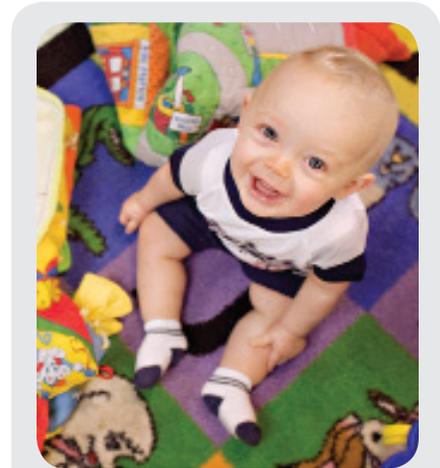


Pain affects their energy, their moods and how they feel about themselves. Some even develop a "fright or flight" response not unlike children who have lived with long-term abuse and neglect.

The goal of **Cavity-Free: Birth-to-3** is to overcome the root causes and help pilot county community leaders provide increased access to timely, appropriate and affordable dental care for eligible newborn to 3-year-old children.

1. Our first objective is to create opportunities for community leaders to learn about children's oral care needs and the social impact that results if left untreated. Solution can be achieved through the use of local resources and volunteerism along with financial and technical assistance from the Initiative Foundation.
2. Our second objective is to partner with community leaders to educate residents and to assist with strategic planning to support community-based Early Childhood Coalitions. Members of the coalition will develop a shared vision and plan of action around the care and education of young children and their families, particularly as it relates to oral health care for low income children.
3. Foundation staff will provide technical assistance to communities and their coalitions along with access to grants to help support their action plan implementation.

** Additional counties may be added to this essential community development effort as funding sources are identified and secured.*



Objectives

- Seek out partners within Mille Lacs County to increase outcomes for income-eligible children from birth to age 3.
- Educate pilot county community leaders about the importance of early oral health and provide support to implement action plans to serve more eligible children.
- Offer up to \$10,000 annually to eligible lead organizations within the pilot county to implement action plans. The grant application must specify how the funded action plan will serve children 3 and younger. The focus in the first year will be on prenatal to children age 1.

For more information: Initiative Foundation (877) 632-9255 | info@ifound.org

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