



# Frequently Asked Questions



## What is Miles of Smiles?

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### 1. When did the program begin?

Miles of Smiles is a program of the Riverside Community Health Foundation that began in 2001 with a pilot of the program at one school, Bryant Elementary in Riverside Unified School District.

### 2. Why was the program started?

The program was created in 2001 as a result of conversations with school nurses and in response to an unmet need for dental care for children in Riverside. Oral health care is the most common unmet healthcare need among children. The Miles of Smiles program was created to provide preventative services for Riverside school children to reduce tooth decay through education, screening and the placement of sealants.

### 3. Are there partners in this program?

Yes. Riverside Community Health Foundation partners with Riverside County Superintendent of School's Career Technical Education Program, Riverside Unified School District, Jurupa Unified School District and Alvord Unified School District and area clinics.

### 4. Who is the Miles of Smiles program funded by?

Miles of Smiles is funded by Riverside Community Health Foundation.

## Eligibility

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### 5. How does a school qualify to have Miles of Smiles at their school?

Schools are identified to participate in Miles of Smiles based on free/reduced lunch rates and/or socioeconomically disadvantaged rates. Schools that are at a minimum of 50% are invited to be a part of the program. It is up to the school principal to accept the invitation.

### 6. Do you have any geographic limitations?

Yes. The Foundation's funds are restricted to serving residents in Riverside city from the following zip codes: 92501, 92502, 92503, 92504, 92505, 92506, 92507, 92508, 92509, 92518, 92521, 92522, and 91752. These restrictions are mandated per the Attorney General.

## Questions about the Dental Health Fair

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### 7. What happens at a dental health fair?

During the Dental Health Fair (DHF) all children receive education from a Dental Educator. The topics include: *What Do Our Mouths Do, Open Wide – What's Inside, Lets Investigate Tooth Decay*, and *What Keeps Our Mouth Healthy*. Children are taught about the function of their teeth, brushing, flossing

sugars, acids, fluoride, and nutrition. All children receive a toothbrush to take home. Children who have returned a positive consent form are then screened by a Dentist or Registered Dental Hygienist, with 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders being screened for sealants. Riverside County Superintendent of Schools CTE Dental Assistant students assist with charting the results from Level 1 – no obvious decay, Level 2 – recommend an annual checkup, Level 3 – severe dental problems, and Level 4 – emergency dental treatment. Upon completion of the DHF, each parent whose child had a level 3 or 4 result is called and referred for dental treatment. If they do not have a dental provider, they are referred to one. Families are also assisted with insurance coverage information if applicable. The sealant clinics take place 2 to 4 weeks after the DHF in which a Dental Hygienist and an Assistant apply sealants to the children's teeth.

**8. Is there a fee?**

No, there is no fee to participate in the program.

## Sealant Placement

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**9. What are sealants?**

Sealants are thin, plastic coatings painted on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth. Sealants are painted on as liquid and quickly harden to form a shield over the tooth. When dental sealants are properly placed and retained on tooth surface, teeth will have 100% caries protection. Placement of a dental sealant is a noninvasive technique that preserves the tooth structure and also prevents dental decay.

**10. Are they the same sealants that are used in dental offices?**

Yes.

**11. How long do sealants last?**

Generally, a sealant can last from 5 to 10 years.

**12. How many sealants can a child receive?**

A child may receive up to eight (8) sealants.

**13. How long does it take to place a sealant?**

Each sealant placement takes approximately four (4) minutes.

## Dental Treatment

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**14. Is there any treatment that happens during the program?**

No. There is no treatment or anything invasive that occurs during the dental screening. The screening that is conducted is a visual screening.

**15. Where are families referred to for treatment?**

Families are referred to see their own dental provider. However, if a family does not have a dental provider, they are referred to 1 of 4 dental clinics in Riverside city.

**16. How are parents notified of the available dental clinics for treatment?**

After the screening is completed, parents whose children received a level 3 or 4 (which means they need to see a dentist) receive a phone call. During the phone call the parents are referred to see their dental provider or are referred to 1 of 4 clinics if they do not have one. If a child receives sealants, they are given a Results Form to take home to their parents. The Results Form has four clinics listed where they can call for treatment as needed.

**Information for School Personnel**

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**17. How is the schedule developed?**

The schedule is developed based on each school’s bell schedule, recess, lunch, minimum days, testing, holidays and vacation days. A preliminary schedule is developed and presented to the school contact for approval. Changes are made if necessary.

**18. How is the room(s) chosen for the dental health fair?**

The school staff identifies what room(s) can be used.

**19. What if I have a family who is in need of toothbrushes or a parent who wants floss or toothpaste?**

If a family speaks to a teacher, nurse or other school staff and states they do not have toothbrushes, toothpaste or dental floss, the Miles of Smiles program can assist.

**20. Why isn’t toothpaste or floss given to the child at the dental health fair?**

At the programs initial stages toothpaste and dental floss were given to the children, however, the children had fun with these items and squeezed out the toothpaste and wrapped the dental floss around their fingers. This is why it is not given out to the children.

**21. Can the Miles of Smiles program do a presentation for parents at my school?**

Yes. If you would like a presentation conducted at your school, please contact Gilbert Espinoza, Public Relations & Outreach Coordinator at (951) 788-3471 or by e-mail at [Gilbert@rchf.org](mailto:Gilbert@rchf.org).

**What if we still have a question? Is there someone specific at the Foundation whom I should contact?**

If you have a question that is not addressed here, please contact:

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