

ORAL HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN MAINE

Autumn 2023

Project Purpose

Disability Rights Maine and the Children's Oral Health Network of Maine partnered to collect data to better understand the oral health care needs of children with disabilities.



Methodology

DRM used an online survey and one-on-one phone interviews to collect data. Participants learned about the project through newsletters and social media.

*Surveys: 42 respondents

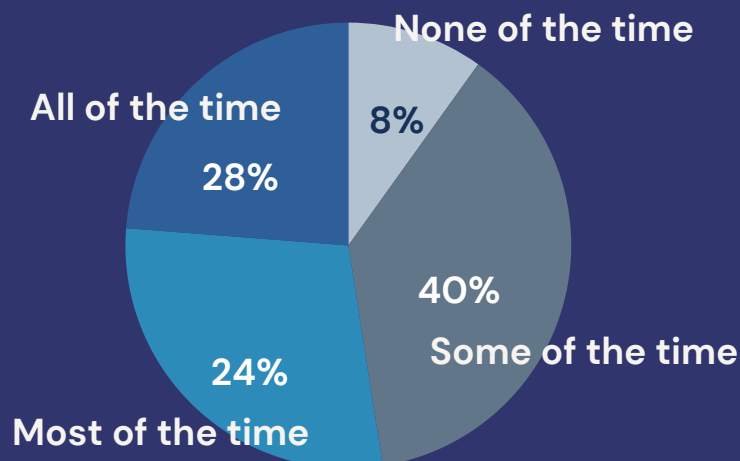
*Interviews: 13 participants

69% of children in families surveyed have an oral health care provider they see regularly. 31% do not.

Why does your child not see an oral health care provider regularly?

- The providers do not provide the accommodations I need (56%)
- The provider does not feel able to meet my child's needs (56%)
- There are no providers in the area (33%)
- Some other reason (33%)
- My child's dental insurance does not cover the care they need (11%)
- I do not know how to find an oral health care provider (11%)

Are the oral health care providers you see able to provide care and support to your child that meets their needs?

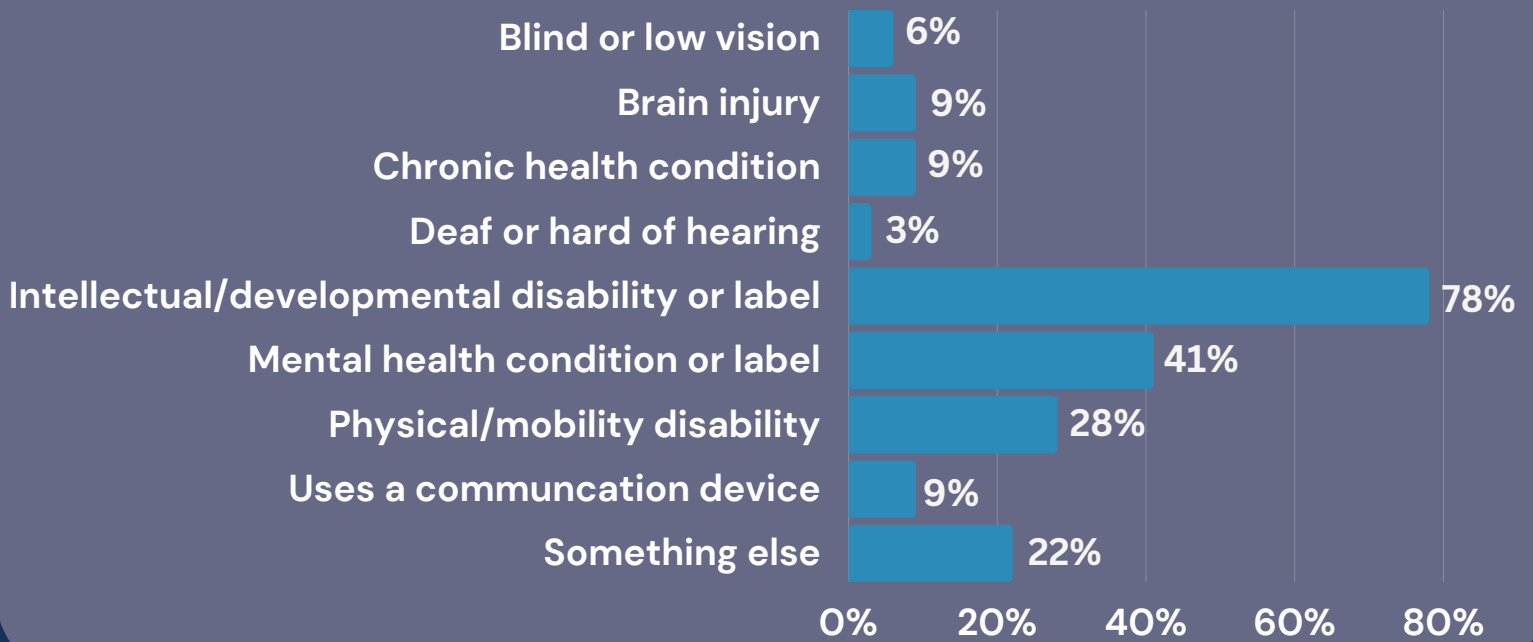




A number of dentists stopped accepting MaineCare and it's incredibly difficult to find one who both takes our insurance and can offer sedation.



What type of disability does your child have? Please check all that apply.



What type of dental insurance does your child have?

MaineCare



Other dental coverage plan



Private insurance



No dental insurance



What issues has your child experienced around oral health care?

- Unable to get oral health care when needed (57%)
- Does not want to brush or floss (48%)
- Experienced tooth decay, gum disease, or cavities (43%)
- Needed sedation, but could not find a place to provide it (24%)
- Provider did not allow enough time for the visit (19%)
- Provider did not speak directly to my child (14%)
- Some other issue (14%)
- Misdiagnosed oral health issue as a behavioral issue (10%)
- Provider declined to provide needed accommodations (10%)
- Provider said my child needed sedation, but this is not true (5%)

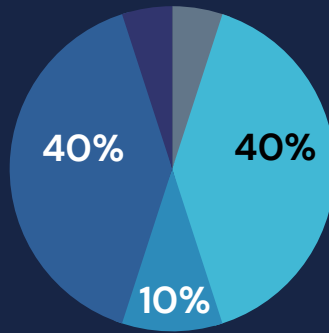


[The] dentist means well but is frightened of folks with disabilities and high anxiety. In the past, dental hygienists have explained that they do not have a duty to treat – if a child or adult is having difficulty, they can stop treatment, “we never received training on patients with disabilities or autism.”

My child's age is:

18-21 years old 5% 0-4 years old 5%

15-17 years old



5-11 years old

12-14 years old



My child's race/ethnicity is:

American Indian/Alaska Native 0%

Asian/Asian American 4%

Black/African American 8%

Hispanic/Latino 4%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0%

White 88%

I prefer not to answer 4%

My child is currently living:



At home with family (91%)



On their own (6%)



In an institutional placement or treatment facility/program (3%)

The county we live in is:



Received responses



No responses

