

FAQ - Choosing a mobile dental provider for your school

Increasingly, schools are being bombarded with offers from mobile dental providers, so how do you choose the right one?

Why are so many providers approaching us?

Low-income families are entitled to the Child Dental Benefit Schedule (CDBS) - a payment from Medicare so that children can receive \$1095 worth of dental care every two years at no cost to their family. This has attracted new privately owned for-profit providers, who particularly target disadvantaged schools where there is high CDBS eligibility.

What if some of our students are not eligible for CDBS?

Most of the for-profit providers will only see CDBS-eligible children. They will not see children who are not eligible or children who have no Medicare card (such as refugee or migrant children). Many also will not see those with private health care because they will only be paid a small amount. Or they may see non-eligible children but will charge a fee to the families.

So which mobile service will see all the children at our school?

Ask your provider if they see all children at no out-of-pocket cost to families.

Ask your provider if they are charging some families to see their children.

Look for a not-for-profit provider who will guarantee to see all children at no out-of-pocket expense, such as the Australian Dental Foundation.

Isn't there a government dental service for children?

Yes, each State government in Australia runs a dental program for children, with varying eligibility, costs and accessibility. Go to www.health.gov.au/topics/dental-health to find your State's dental contacts.

Shouldn't parents be taking their kids to the dentist?

Parents may face obstacles to taking their children to the dentist: They may not be able to afford it; they may have work which prevents them taking their child; they may not be close enough to a State clinic; they may not have reliable transport; they may not understand the importance of dental care; or, they may face cultural or language barriers. These are reasons that mobile school services have become so popular.



Are regular dental checks that important anyway?

Yes, every six months is recommended. Regular dental checks can prevent pain and future medical issues by providing early intervention and treatment. Education about good oral health as a child is important for good oral health as an adult, which has health implications beyond your mouth.

Check that your provider provides education or will do a presentation about oral health to students and/or staff. Dental issues are one of the leading causes of potentially preventable hospitalisations (PPH) in children so preventative check-ups are important.

Is our mobile provider fully qualified and accredited?

You can ask to see the qualifications and registration of each clinician (or look up their registration at www.ahpra.gov.au) as well as the usual police and working with children checks. You can also ask for the provider's protocols around sterilisation, infection control and privacy provisions. Are they QIP-accredited? QIP accreditation is the highest standard that any dental practice can have.

You should also ask questions regarding patient care – so what happens if someone seen by them has exhausted their CDBS but still needs further care?

If there is an emergency relating to one of their patients, how quickly can they be seen by the visiting dentist?

Does the provider have an after-hours emergency service?

We don't want to send our students out to a trailer to see the dentists, can we still have a mobile provider visit?

Yes, some providers can see children in a spare classroom or wellbeing room which can help you to maintain lines of sight and might be less intimidating for children.

Some schools prefer a trailer because they don't have a suitable space in the school.

I still have questions? Who can I contact?

You can find out more by contacting Australian Dental Foundation at our website www.dentalfoundation.org.au

