

# Oral Health of Young Children in the Health Unit Region

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## Key Highlights

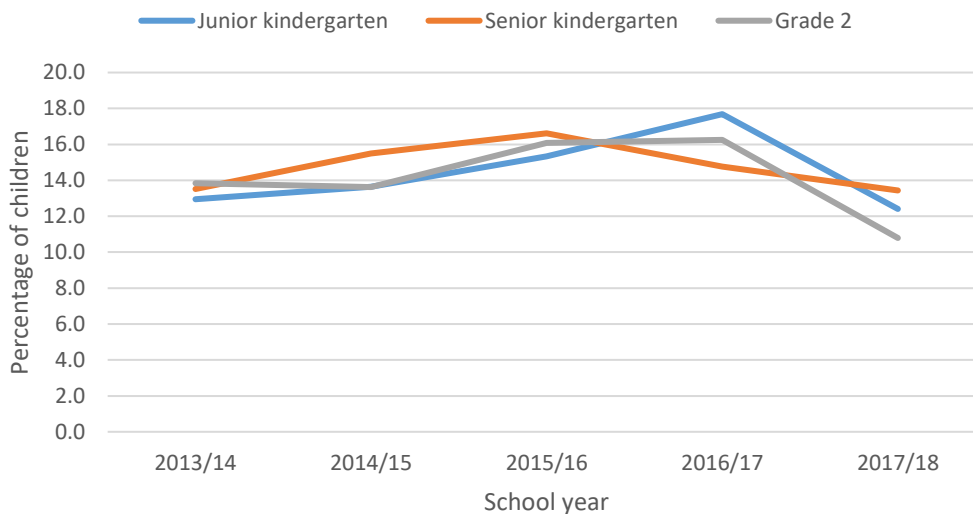
- Fewer children in junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten, and grade 2 had decayed teeth in the 2017/18 school year compared to the previous four school years (i.e., since 2013/14).
- The percentage of children with missing and filled teeth in all three grade levels declined between the 2015/16 and 2017/18 school years.
- Boys and girls in all three grade levels had similar percentages of decayed, missing, and filled teeth in 2017/18, although in the past, more boys in grade 2 had decayed teeth compared to girls.

## Fewer children with decayed teeth in the 2017/18 school year

The percentage of children with decayed teeth identified at the time of school dental screenings rose between the 2013/14 and 2016/17 school years, before dropping slightly in 2017/18 for children in junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten, and grade 2 (Figure 1; Table 1). An average of about two teeth were decayed among children with decayed teeth between 2015/16 and 2017/18. Absenteeism ranged from 6.0% to 11.1% of students across the three grades, in any given school year from 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Children born prior to 2010 showed a pattern of increasing decay as children grew older (i.e., percentage of children with decay in junior kindergarten compared to those in grade 2; Figure 2 and Table 2). This pattern appears to have reversed among children born in 2010. For children born in 2011 or later, fewer children had decayed teeth in grade 2 compared to junior kindergarten (Figure 2; Table 2). The Healthy Smiles Ontario program, a provincially government-funded program granting access to free dental care for eligible children aged 17 years or younger, was instituted in 2010.

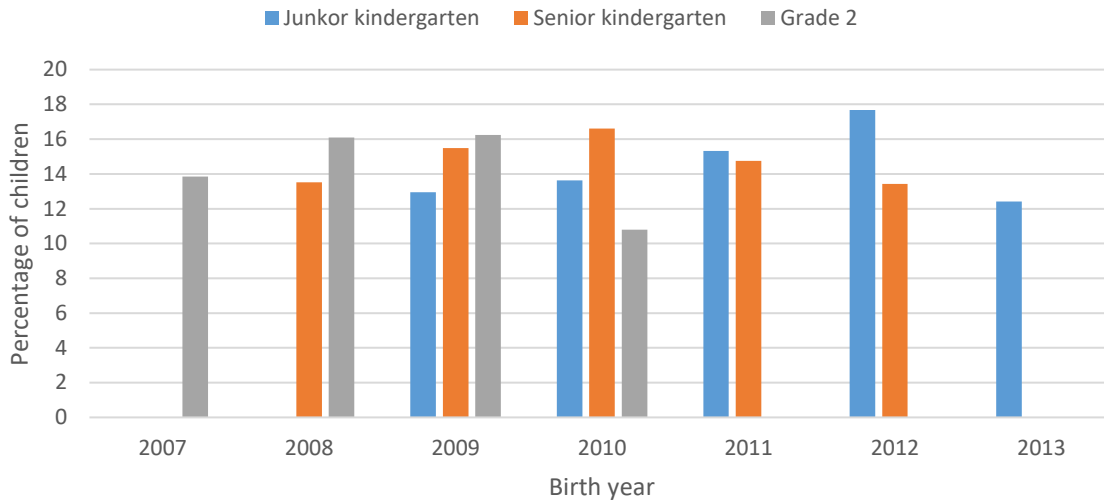
**Figure 1. Percentage of Children with Decayed Teeth, By Grade, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**



**Table 2. Percentage of Children with Decayed Teeth, By Grade, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Junior kindergarten	Senior kindergarten	Grade 2
2013/14	12.9	13.5	13.8
2014/15	13.6	15.5	13.6
2015/16	15.3	16.6	16.1
2016/17	17.7	14.8	16.3
2017/18	12.4	13.4	10.8

**Figure 2. Percentage of Children with Decayed Teeth, By Year of Birth and Grade, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**



**Table 2. Percentage of Children with Decayed Teeth, By Year of Birth and Grade, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

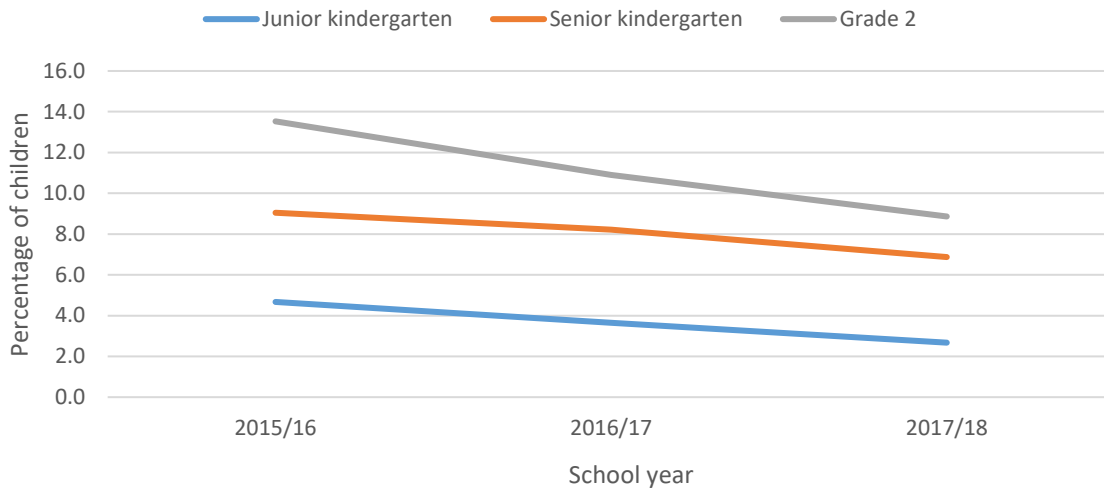
Birth Year	Junior kindergarten	Senior kindergarten	Grade 2
2007	N/A	N/A	13.8
2008	N/A	13.5	16.1
2009	12.9	15.5	16.3
2010	13.6	16.6	10.8
2011	15.3	14.8	N/A
2012	17.7	13.4	N/A
2013	12.4	N/A	N/A

N/A – Data is not available.

### Declines in children with missing and filled teeth

The percentage of children with missing teeth identified at the time of school dental screenings fell between 2015/16 and 2017/18 school years across all three grade levels (Figure 3; Table 3). The percentage of children with teeth filled because of decay dropped slightly since 2016/17 across all three grade levels (Figure 4; Table 4).

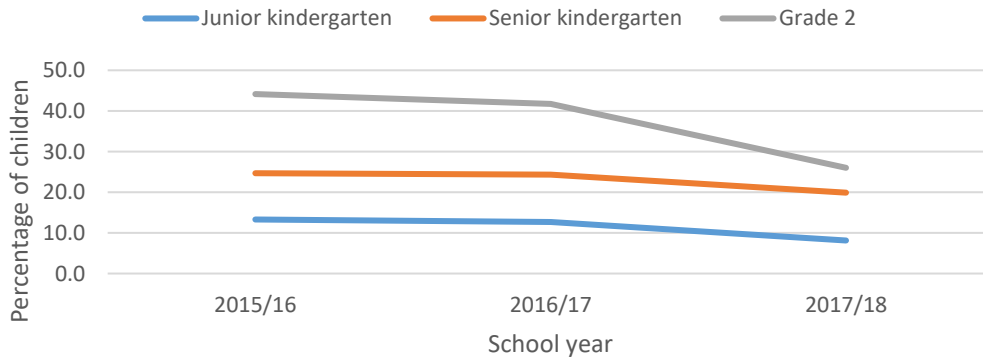
**Figure 3. Percentage of Children with Missing Teeth, By Grade, 2015/16– 2017/18 School Year**



**Table 3. Percentage of Children with Missing Teeth, By Grade, 2015/16 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Junior kindergarten	Senior kindergarten	Grade 2
2015/16	4.7	9.0	13.5
2016/17	3.6	8.2	10.9
2017/18	2.7	6.9	8.9

**Figure 4. Percentage of Children with Filled Teeth, By Grade, 2015/16– 2017/18 School Year**



**Table 4. Percentage of Children with Missing Teeth, By Grade, 2015/16 – 2017/18 School Year**

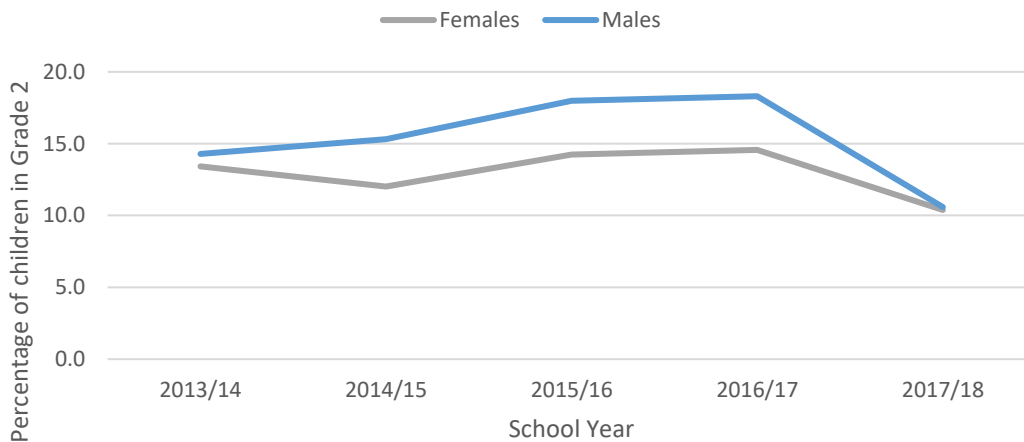
School Year	Junior kindergarten	Senior kindergarten	Grade 2
2015/16	13.3	24.7	44.1
2016/17	12.6	24.3	41.7
2017/18	8.1	19.9	26.0

## Boys and girls have similar percentages of decayed, missing, and filled teeth

Between the 2013/14 and 2017/18 school years, the percentage of children with decayed teeth was generally similar between boys and girls in junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten (Tables 4 and 5). Among children in grade 2, decayed teeth were more common among boys compared to girls between 2014/15 and 2016/7 (Figure 5; Tables 5 - 7).

The percentage of missing or filled teeth was comparable between boys and girls for all grade levels (Tables 8 - 13).

**Figure 5. Percentage of Children in Grade 2 with Decayed Teeth, By Sex, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**



**Table 5. Percentage of Children with Decayed Teeth Among Children in Junior Kindergarten, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2013/14	15.2	10.9
2014/15	14.2	12.9
2015/16	15.3	15.4
2016/17	20.3	14.8
2017/18	12.1	11.9

**Table 6. Percentage of Children with Decayed Teeth Among Children in Senior Kindergarten, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2013/14	14.2	12.8
2014/15	15.4	15.4
2015/16	17.1	16.2
2016/17	15.0	14.6
2017/18	13.7	12.6

**Table 7. Percentage of Children with Decayed Teeth Among Children in Grade 2, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2013/14	14.3	13.4
2014/15	15.3	12.0
2015/16	18.0	14.2
2016/17	18.3	14.6
2017/18	10.6	10.4

**Table 8. Percentage of Children with Missing Teeth Among Children in Junior Kindergarten, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2015/16	4.5	4.9
2016/17	3.9	3.4
2017/18	3.0	1.9

**Table 9. Percentage of Children with Missing Teeth Among Children in Senior Kindergarten, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2015/16	9.6	8.6
2016/17	8.1	8.3
2017/18	6.8	7.1

**Table 10. Percentage of Children with Missing Teeth Among Children in Grade 2, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2015/16	15.0	12.0
2016/17	11.8	10.1
2017/18	9.4	8.1

**Table 11. Percentage of Children with Filled Teeth Among Children in Junior Kindergarten, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2015/16	14.5	12.0
2016/17	13.3	11.9
2017/18	9.1	6.3

**Table 12. Percentage of Children with Filled Teeth Among Children in Senior Kindergarten, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2015/16	25.3	24.2
2016/17	26.9	21.7
2017/18	21.2	18.6

**Table 13. Percentage of Children with Filled Teeth Among Children in Grade 2, 2013/14 – 2017/18 School Year**

School Year	Boys (Males)	Girls (Females)
2015/16	48.1	40.1
2016/17	42.0	41.4
2017/18	26.5	25.2

## Definitions and data sources

### Definition

#### **Decay:**

Includes a carious region on a primary tooth that will soon exfoliate, or on a permanent or crucial primary tooth (i.e., a cavity).

#### **Missing:**

Includes teeth missing due to caries (i.e., not from trauma, orthodontic extraction, congenitally missing, or another reason).

#### **Filled:**

Includes teeth filled due to caries (i.e., a cavity).

### **Data sources:**

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Oral Health Program internal data. Students screened between 2013/14 and 2017/18.

### **Analysis:**

Analyzed using STATA IC/14.2 (2014)