



Give Kids A Smile Planning Guide

How to plan, implement and report a successful GKAS event in Ohio

Ohio Dental Association

This guide has been written by the Ohio Dental Association Public Service Department for the use of Ohio's GKAS event coordinators. If you are planning a GKAS event in Ohio and need further assistance or have questions, please contact the ODA at 614-486-2700 or email Kristy@oda.org.

Background

Give Kids A Smile is a national initiative supported by the ADA Foundation where dental volunteers provide free dental care and oral health education to underserved children. Ohio dentists have strongly supported GKAS since the program began in 2003 with nearly \$1million in donated care provided each year for thousands of children. The Ohio Dental Association provides additional assistance with Ohio GKAS events, including help with planning a successful event. Although the kickoff day is always the first Friday in February, events can be held any time of the year that is convenient for you.

Anyone can hold a GKAS event, whether it is a single dentist, a private dental office, dental clinic or dental society. Events vary greatly from one to the next, offering flexibility to those planning events to make it work for you.

Guide

This guide is intended to help Ohio dentists, dental offices, dental societies, clinics and other community groups interested in holding a GKAS event to be successful in their planning and implementation of the event. By spending a little more time planning the event, your group will be able to help more children and you will have a better experience too. If you have held a GKAS event in the past, you may still find parts of this guide helpful, especially if you want to increase the number of children your event helps.

Registering with the ADA Foundation

Once you go through this guide and determine your initial GKAS plans, you will want to make sure to register your GKAS event with the ADA Foundation at this link:

<http://www.adafoundation.org/en/give-kids-a-smile>

Generally each year registration opens at the beginning of October and groups have until early November to register with the option to be considered for donated product. You can still register after the product deadline, however, you will not be considered for product kits by the ADA Foundation.

In order to register your event, you will need to have an estimate of the following:

- Event date
- Event location
- Age range of the children the event will serve
- Whether your event will provide education only, will include a screening and will include dental treatment
- The total dollar value of dental care you expect to provide
- The number of children you expect to see
- The number of dentist volunteers expected
- The number of other volunteers expected

The ODA staff is happy to help you register your event! Just call the Public Service Department at 614-486-2700 for assistance.

Health History and Consent Form

No child should ever be seen under GKAS without a signed health history and consent form from the child's parent or legal guardian. A sample form is posted on <http://oda.org/community-involvement/give-kids-a-smile/> that can be downloaded and tailored to your particular event and copied for distribution.

Type of event

Before you decide on details like date and time, think about the type of event you want to hold. The main types of events are:

- Oral health education to children in schools or head starts
- Oral screenings for children in schools or head starts (with the option to provide needed dental services that you identify during the screening for children on a later date). You might be able to provide limited preventive care in this type of setting as well, such as a toothbrush cleaning and fluoride treatment.
- Event at a dental clinic or office where you partner with a school/head start or other organization that serves specific children. The kids are transported to your clinic, receive services and are transported back to school. You determine what services your event will provide, which could be limited to preventive care or could include the full range of restorative if needed.
- Event that is open to the public for any child to attend at your office or dental clinic. You determine what services your event will provide, which could be limited to preventive care or could include the full range of restorative if needed. You also determine if you will allow children to come back to your office for free follow-up care if you are not able to do it during the event.

With all of these events, you will need to determine the number of children that you can help and the number of volunteers you will need to see all of the kids you plan on. Since each of these events may involve reaching out to schools or other organizations that work with kids, it is very important to explain that you are trying to provide a FREE service to the children and that it is not a promotional activity for your office to find kids to become part of your practice as paying patients in the future. GKAS is a goodwill program to increase oral health for underserved children. Also, when choosing a school, try to find one that has a large population of underserved, low-income kids, such as those that qualify for free or reduced school lunch.

Since each event is very different, each type of event and how to plan it is discussed separately.

Education Only Events

Dentists, hygienists, other volunteers, or even an entire dental office can go in to a classroom setting and provide demonstrations on tooth brushing, good nutrition and how to take care of their teeth. This type of event can be easier to plan because you do not have to worry about obtaining health history and treatment consent forms as you are not providing any dental care for the children.

By registering this type of event, you could receive product donations that allow you to give out goodie bags to the children including toothbrushes and toothpaste.

In order to plan this type of event, you will need to find a school, head start, community organization (or several of these) that will work with you. The school will have to allow you to take school time to give presentations to the kids in a classroom setting. This may be most beneficial to the younger school kids, pre-k through 2nd grade, but educational materials could be tailored toward older children as well (even consider adding in some science into the presentation!). Start early, even when school starts for the year, to try to find schools to work with. Once you create a great partnership, you may want to continue working with that school each year. Contact schools where your children are or were students or if you know of a patient of your office that works at a school, reach out to them for ideas.

Work with a contact at the school to set up dates and times for one or more volunteers to present the program at the school. A presentation could last about 15 minutes, allowing you to visit multiple classrooms during a short time of volunteering. Also consider working with multiple schools and spreading these activities out over several weeks or months!

TRACKING AND REPORTING: Make sure you track the number of children that you present the program to. You can assign a reasonable dollar value for the oral health education, such as \$1-\$10 per child. Make sure to report this information to the ODA after you have completed your educational activities!

PUBLICITY: By providing free education to children in schools, you have a potentially newsworthy event that the media may be interested in! We recommend you send a press release (the ODA will provide a template in January) to local news outlets like newspapers and television stations to let them know you will be at the school doing these activities. They may run the press release in the paper or send a reporter out to cover the event. Coverage of these types of activities are great, as it shows that dental professionals are helping the community, increases awareness about oral health and GKAS, and brings your office/clinic publicity! Also post on your Facebook to let your patients know the great things you are doing in the community!

In School Screening Events

Very similar to the education only events, you can go one step further and provide dental screenings to the children as well. This can also be accomplished while educating the classroom of kids by having one volunteer present education while the other pulls children aside individually for a quick screening. The screenings can also be done without an educational classroom program and individual oral hygiene instruction could be given to children during the screening.

The general planning of this type of event is also similar to an education only event, with one major addition: you **MUST** have a health history and consent form for a child before you do a screening! In order to do this, you will need to send over the forms to the school well in advance (a month or more) for the teachers to send forms home with each child for their parents to sign. Only those kids who return a signed form will be able to be screened and unfortunately, that may be as few as 50% of the kids in the class sometimes. Encourage teachers to send home reminders with kids that have not brought back forms the week before you are scheduled to come in.

Create an “Oral Health Report Card” where you mark any findings from the screening. Include if the child should go to the dentist immediately, soon or for their next regular cleaning. You can provide recommendations on the report card such as “Brush twice a day for 2 minutes and don’t forget to floss!”, “Visit the dentist every 6 months to keep your smile healthy!”, etc.

Depending on the classroom, you may also be able to provide limited preventive care in addition to the screening. A spin brush cleaning and fluoride application could be added following the screening.

Another consideration is if you would want to invite the children who are found to need restorative services during the screening back to your office or clinic for free follow-up care. You could also assign children to multiple offices if several dental offices are participating, allowing each office to only take on a few children who need restorative care. Just write a note on the oral health report card that goes home with the student to call your office to schedule a free follow-up visit to receive the restorative services.

TRACKING AND REPORTING: Make sure you track the number of children that are educated, the number of children that receive oral screenings, and the dollar value for the event. You can determine dollar value by assigning a reasonable price to the screening (around \$30-40 or whatever your group feels is reasonable) and reporting that along with the numbers of children. If you are providing free follow-up care for those that need it after the event, make sure you and any other offices you send kids to report that free follow-up care too!

PUBLICITY: By providing free screenings to children in schools, you have a potentially newsworthy event that the media may be interested in! We recommend you send a press release (the ODA will provide a template in January) to local news outlets like newspapers and television stations to let them know you will be at the school doing these activities. They may run the press release in the paper or send a reporter out to cover the event. Coverage of these types of activities are great, as it shows that dental professionals are helping the community, increases awareness about oral health and GKAS, and brings your office/clinic publicity! Also post on your Facebook to let your patients know the great things you are doing in the community!

Dental Care Event Closed to the Public

This type of event can be logistically challenging, however it ensures your volunteers will see closer to the number of children you are expecting for the event. This type of event is similar to the previous two in that you will need to find a school, head start, daycare or other group that has children in their care for a period of time. The school needs to be more involved, as they will not only have to help with getting health history and consent forms for each child, they will also need to assist you with transporting the children to your office or clinic. Some schools are very happy to help with this, others are just not able to do so and need you to come to the

school. The advantage to having the kids bussed to your clinic is that you can see them in a dental setting and provide more services that you could not provide in a school. These types of events also require a larger number of volunteers as a lot of children will arrive at your clinic at one time.

Again, find a school to partner with and explain that you want them to bus the children who have signed consent forms to your clinic at a scheduled date and time. Decide what procedures you want to provide. If you are providing only preventive services, you may be able to see more children that day. You can provide restorative services for those that need it, if time allows. You could also allow children to be scheduled for a follow-up appointment to get restorative care done for free on another day.

TRACKING AND REPORTING: Make sure to track the number of children that your event sees, the total dollar value of care you provided for free and the number of each individual service provided. If you are providing free follow-up care for those that need it after the event, make sure you and any other offices you send kids to report that free follow-up care too!

PUBLICITY: By providing free dental care to children at your clinic/office, you have a potentially newsworthy event that the media may be interested in! We recommend you send a press release (the ODA will provide a template in January) to local news outlets like newspapers and television stations to let them know you will be doing these activities at your office/clinic. They may run the press release in the paper or send a reporter out to cover the event. Coverage of these types of activities are great, as it shows that dental professionals are helping the community, increases awareness about oral health and GKAS, and brings your office/clinic publicity! Also post on your Facebook to let your patients know the great things you are doing in the community!

Dental Care Event Open to the Public

GKAS events open to the public could be a smashing success, helping lots of children who are in need of dental care, or it can have a dismal response, leaving volunteers wishing they were helping more children. The great thing about this type of event is that you can provide any services you want and have time for. You can also schedule children back for appointments to get free follow-up care if needed.

To maximize potential for more kids to come to your event, you will want to promote your event through a variety of methods as well as structure the event in a way that removes potential barriers to attendance.

Strategies to increase event attendance:

Do you require an appointment?

If you have held an open GKAS event in the past, did you require that those interested in attending the event call ahead and reserve a spot, put their name on the list or make an appointment for a specific time? If not, you might consider requiring this for a few reasons:

1. You will be able to gauge the response you are getting from your promotion. If you only have a couple children signed up just a few days before the event, you know you either need to increase promotion, change promotional methods or reduce the time of your GKAS event so you can see regular patients for part of the day.
2. If you do a great job of publicizing and have more people calling to make appointments than expected, you can either plan ahead on how you can meet the demand, or you can

create a waitlist that you can call on GKAS Day to see if the parent would be able to bring in the child on short notice.

3. When no appointment or call-ahead is required, potential patients may think there will be a big line, and a long wait. It is hard enough for parents to take off work to get their child to the dentist, but doing so for an unforeseeable amount of time is impossible. No one wants to wait all day to have the possibility of being seen.
4. Even though your GKAS patients are being seen for free, they may still want to feel like a regular paying patient, and an appointment adds a feeling of normalcy to the event. Just think, the child may not even know their family needs to get free dental care in order to receive care, so try to make the appointment as normal as possible (but that doesn't mean you can't have a little extra fun for those events that make GKAS Days a party for their patients!). You want the kids to have a great experience going to the dentist, as this may be the first visit for some children.

Requiring an appointment or call ahead to reserve a space is easy. Just include language in your promotion such as:

- Appointments for GKAS Day are limited. Call ahead to make an appointment at xxx-xxx-xxxx
- Only patients who make an appointment will be seen on GKAS Day. Call us at xxx-xxx-xxxx to make an appointment for your child today!

What day and time of the year are you holding your event?

The national kickoff day for Give Kids A Smile is always the first Friday in February, but you can hold your event any day of the year that works for you! If you have had a less than desirable response holding an event on the kickoff day in the past, try one of these options:

- Pick a date when the local schools are closed for the day so parents don't have to decide to take their children out of school
- Hold a summer break event, possibly a week or two after the end of the school year so you can still work with the schools to promote the event to kids.
- Hold a back to school event, the week or two before school starts in your area to get kids ready to go back to school with clean smiles.
- Also look at the time of day for your event. Some events have been more successful with a 4-8pm time than a morning or early afternoon time. If you had a difficult time in the past, consider an evening event, as this could be easier for working parents.

How early should you start promoting your event?

Early! Start promoting at least 2 months before the event and increase your promotional efforts as the event approaches.

Why start early?

- If you had to take time off of work to take your child to the dentist, you would probably need to know several weeks in advance to plan for the vacation time.
- It may take a few times of hearing about the event before a parent calls to make an appointment.
- If you have a slow response with few appointments scheduled, you can increase your promotion or change methods, but only if you have time to do so!

If you are a month out from your event and you have a minimal amount of appointments already scheduled, ramp up your promotional efforts or change promotional methods to ensure you get the information to the right people!

If you started promoting early last year but felt you still did not receive as big of a response as you were hoping for, start earlier this year and try some other methods of promoting your event too.

Who do you reach out to... how and when?

Local media (newspapers, TV stations, radio stations)

HOW: Email a press release and/or media alert to reporters at these media outlets. Look on the media outlet's website for a generic email as well as any reporters who you might already have a relationship with or who cover health news. If you know of any patients of your practice that are members of the media, send them your press release!

WHEN: Email the press release about 1-month prior to the event. Follow-up with the same contacts with a media alert the week of the event to encourage the media to come to your event to cover it!

TEMPLATE: The ODA will provide a template press release and media alert for you to tailor to your event.

Community calendars

Often the newspaper or TV station in your area has a community calendar.

HOW: Do a Google search for "Community calendar [YOUR CITY] and see what community calendars come up. Post to several of them! Usually a calendar has an "add an event listing" button or something similar where you fill out a form with your event information. Make sure to include who the audience for your event is—children in low-income families who can't afford basic dental care.

WHEN: You can set up community calendar listings as soon as you choose your event date and decide on some other basic event details such as what services you will be offering.

School systems, teachers and school nurses

Reach out to the school districts in your area to see if they would be interested in promoting the event to their students. Some districts will let you send flyers and information home with children to the parents, others may not. When speaking with school officials, it is important to tell them that this event is free to the child and their family and that it is not to promote your practice. Your event is a public service to increase access to care to those who cannot afford it, not a marketing tool to increase your patient base.

HOW: Contact school administrators and school nurses in your school districts via phone. Explain what your event is and that it is free for children. Ask if they would be willing to send information home with parents (especially if you provide them with printed flyers) or if school nurses can send information home specifically with children that have complained of toothaches or have had oral screenings that showed a need for follow-up care. Chances are, a school nurse knows of at least one child that could benefit from your event.

When you get a contact that is interested in working with you on your event, keep in contact with them! The hardest part is finding the right person, but once you do, they can become a huge advocate for getting children to your event.

WHEN: Reach out early to schools to get the ball rolling. If you are speaking with school administration, it can take a while before they decide if they will partner with you on the event or not. Give it time, keep following up!

TIP: Before you reach out to schools, get your staff together to brainstorm patients, friends or acquaintances that you know are teachers, school administrators or school nurses to reach out specifically to them. They may be interested in championing the effort for the school to help promote your event if they are already involved with your practice or know one of your staff members. Also try reaching out to the schools where children of any of the practice staff attend.

If you reach a dead end with one school, move on and keep trying to find another. Some schools and staff members are very excited to go out of their way to help kids outside of school or to bring oral health into the classroom, you just have to find the right fit.

Social media

If your dental office or clinic has a public Facebook or Twitter page, make sure to share your event on those pages! You never know who will see these through a friend of a friend that liked your page.

HOW: You can use Facebook by creating an event on your group's page and sharing it. Ask your staff members to join in the promotion by sharing the event with their Facebook friends.

You can also post on Facebook and Twitter frequently to remind everyone about the event or provide updates on the number of appointments that are still available. Sometimes including images will help your posts get viewed more on these sites. If you have images of last year's GKAS event at your office, include that with the event information.

WHEN: Once you get your event date chosen, make the event page on Facebook to get the information out there. About a month away from the event, start posting one per week. The week of the event, start posting more frequently. You can also "live tweet" or "live post" from your event giving updates on how many children you are seeing and how many more spaces are available.

TEMPLATE: The ODA will provide several template Facebook posts to help you get started as well as shareable images that you can use with your posts.

Churches, food banks, daycares, Jobs and Family Services, WIC Offices, etc.

Any organization that has a population of potentially underserved families that it serves or that serves children is a great place to reach out to.

HOW: Brainstorm a list of social service agencies, daycares, churches and any other organizations you can think of. Call the organization and ask if they will promote the event to their clients. Create a flyer that has all of the event info on it and see if you can drop it off for the organization to give to their clients.

WHEN: Again, start early as some organizations might be slow to decide and you want to allow the organization enough time to promote it to their clients for a month or so.

Fast food restaurants, grocery stores, laundromats and other businesses

Not only do many of these businesses have community bulletin boards where you could post a flyer, they may also let you send flyers for their employees. Sometimes individuals working at a fast food restaurant or grocery store are working several part-time jobs or work full-time but do not have dental insurance benefits.

HOW: Try calling these businesses and asking to speak with the manager. Ask the manager if you can bring in a flyer for them to post in their employee break room or by their time clock so their employees will see the information.

WHEN: Start early! You may not always hear a yes from the manager, so it may take a few different places before you get a store or restaurant that will let you post a flyer for their employees.

How will you know what works?

Experiment with different methods of promotion this year, and keep track of how the families that come to your event heard about it! You can do this by...

- Having your reception staff ask the caller how they heard about the GKAS event when they call to schedule an appointment for your event
- Add a line to the forms you use at your GKAS event that simply asks “How did you hear about our GKAS event?”

Keep track of the number of times each method is mentioned. If you don't get a good response from one of the methods, keep that in mind for next year to make publicizing your event even more efficient!

Other GKAS Event Considerations:

Photo release

Before taking a picture of a child at your GKAS event, make sure that their parent or guardian has signed a photo release form, giving you permission to use that photo. The ODA's sample health history and consent form includes photo release language. A sample photo release form is also available upon request by contacting Kristy@oda.org. If you are holding an education only event where a consent form is not signed, ask the school if their students must have a general photo release on file. If no photo release is signed, do NOT take a picture of that child! If you really need a picture but there is no signed photo release, take a picture of your staff person demonstrating proper hygiene procedures, but make sure no one else is in the shot!

No billing for care

GKAS is about helping children in need. Children or their families should not be billed for services they receive during a GKAS event, and if you plan to provide follow-up care that is not free, you need to explain that to the family prior to scheduling them back to your office. Medicaid and private insurance should also not be billed for children that are part of GKAS events.

Volunteer Immunity

Ohio law provides immunity from liability for dentists who volunteer to provide free care to indigent and uninsured patients in a free clinic setting. The immunity protections available, however, are not all encompassing and are only available on a qualified basis. Immunity only applies to specific patients, in specific dental procedures and only after the dentist has executed

notice requirements set forth in state law. Such notice requirements are designed to ensure that patients are aware they will not be permitted to hold the dentist liable for damages in a civil action based on the free dental care unless the dentist willfully or wantonly injures the patient. Additional guidance on Ohio's volunteer immunity laws, including an immunity checklist and sample forms, is available at www.oda.org.

Malpractice Insurance

Some dental malpractice insurance policies cover volunteer activities, but dentists are encouraged to verify coverage prior to participation. Dentists are also advised to determine whether the volunteer organization provides liability coverage to those who serve as volunteers.

Use outside resources

When planning your event, talk to your supply reps, local businesses and anyone you think might be able to add to your event. They may be willing to donate items for goodie bags or provide the volunteers with lunch.

Make it fun

Consider making your event a party by adding fun activities for the children, find someone to dress up as the Tooth Fairy, provide healthy snacks, etc. Part of GKAS is creating a positive experience at the dentist, so make your GKAS event a fun place for kids! Fun can also be education, for example Delta Dental offers a "Rethink Your Drink" display to help educate kids on the amount of sugar in their drinks.

Questions

If you have more questions after reading this guide, please contact the Ohio Dental Association Department of Public Service at Kristy@oda.org or 614-486-2700.