Dental decay is the most common chronic illness among children and can cause difficulty learning, speaking and eating. In Iowa, the I-Smile™ program uses strategies to prevent decay for young children. I-Smile™ connects children and families with dental, medical and community resources to ensure a lifetime of health and wellness. I-Smile™ program staff provide preventive dental services at Head Start classrooms across Iowa, in order to prevent dental decay and establish good oral hygiene habits for young children. An oral health survey was completed during the spring of 2021 using I-Smile™ program data from screenings of Head Start-enrolled children. View the full report on the Bureau of Oral and Health Delivery Systems website.

### Decay Rates by Race

- **17%** of participants had a filled tooth
- **16%** of participants had decay
- **30%** of participants had a history of decay
- **2X** Black participants had decay (27%) at two times the rate of White participants (13%)
- **21%** needed a referral within 3 months or sooner for decay, abscess or pain

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