

# Children with Special Health Care Needs and Oral Health



## Behavioral Influences

- Improper/limited home care
  - Provide resources to aid in home care techniques
    - “Dental Care Every Day: A Caregiver’s Guide” from National Institute of Dental and Cranial Research
- Behavioral management
  - Use positive reinforcement with food and/or beverages to encourage good oral health behaviors, but be aware that this can be cariogenic (frequent interruption of pH balance can lead to acid attacks)
- Revision of overall hygiene schedule may be required
- Medical Immobilization and/or Protective Stabilization (MIPS) may be required (best to develop MIPS plans with qualified dental provider)

## Physical Limitations

- Gastrointestinal feeding tubes
  - Patient still requires regular oral care to remove biofilm and disrupt oral flora; periodontal disease is common
- Muscle paralysis
  - Causes decreased cleaning of debris, pouching, decreased bolus movement, dysphagia
  - Caregivers concern about choking on hygiene items, limited ability to perform hygiene tasks

## Medication Effects

- Reduced salivary flow/dry mouth
  - Antihistamines, anti-depressants, inhaled steroids
- Gingival mucosa overgrowth
  - Phenytoin, calcium channel blockers
- Oral Candidiasis
  - Steroids
- Dental Caries
  - Oral Suspensions, sedatives