Definition of Dental Disability

Originating Committee
Child Abuse Committee
Review Council
Council on Clinical Affairs
Adopted
1983
Revised
Reaffirmed
1996, 2003

Dental caries, periodontal disease, dentoalveolar trauma, and other oral conditions left untreated can limit substantially a child’s development and an individual’s participation in life activities. An individual should be considered to have a dental disability if pain, infection, or lack of stable and functional dentition:

1. restricts nutritional intake necessary for growth and energy needs;
2. delays or otherwise alters growth and development;
3. inhibits participation in life activities; or
4. diminishes quality of life.