

OUTPATIENT PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY



Of course you make safety a priority in your practice. But do your patient families truly understand that? An excellent way to enhance a sense of trust between providers and families seeking care in pediatric dental facilities is a voluntary accreditation program. That's why the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) partnered with the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF) to develop a voluntary sedation/general anesthesia accreditation model for pediatric dental practices. This program is in response to the commitment by pediatric dentists to continue to provide safe environments in which to treat children, and is designed for practices interested in demonstrating that commitment to their patient families. As we find ourselves in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic this has become even more important.

In 2017, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF) first began exploring an accreditation pro-

gram specifically designed to meet the needs of pediatric dentists. Three years later and amid a global health pandemic, accreditation has become an even more important concept and a commitment to a culture of patient safety that requires diligence and protects not just the patient receiving care but the staff and entire community. Such a cultural commitment can help wage the wars against the coronavirus and future pandemics.

When AAPD's Safety Committee and AAAASF began collaborating about a pediatric dentistry accreditation program, the primary objective was to ensure the safest possible delivery of anesthesia, patient monitoring, and ability to respond to emergencies for children. The program was intended to offer facilities the opportunity to demonstrate their compliance with best practices and clinical practice guidelines of the AAPD related to sedation and general anesthesia in the dental office via review and accreditation by a well-recognized independent organization.

For nearly 40 years, the AAAASF's mission has been patient safety in the outpatient surgical area. Pediatric Dentistry accreditation intended to aid safety measures in ambulatory facilities performing the following dental procedures on pediatric patients under sedation or general anesthesia: Dentoalveolar, Simple and Complex Extractions, Dental Restorations, Pulpal Treatment, Soft Tissue Graft, Frenuloplasty, Frenectomy, Space Maintenance, Trauma (Hard and Soft Tissue Trauma, Lacerations, Hard Tissue Dental Fractures including Alveolus, Pathology (Hard and Soft Tissue, Management of Odontogenic Infection, Soft and Hard Tissue Biopsy).

Our goal is to establish and maintain the highest level of safety and preparedness in pediatric dental facilities. This is achieved, in part, by proper credentialing and training of dental and anesthesia providers and focusing on training and education in additional areas including emergency equipment and medications. This process sends a clear message to patients and regulators that AAPD and the individual facility is fully committed to the safety of its patients.

To learn more about the Pediatric Dentistry accreditation program, please visit <https://www.aaaasf.org/programs/outpatient-programs/outpatient-pediatric-dentistry/>.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Why is the AAPD involved in this collaborative effort?** The AAPD supports accreditation through AAAASF because it promotes patient safety in the outpatient surgical area, the highest level of safety and preparedness in pediatric dental facilities, proper credentialing and training of dental and anesthesia providers, and a focus on training and education in additional areas including emergency equipment and medications. The AAPD sees the proactive value of an accreditation opportunity for pediatric dental offices. Three years ago, the AAPD evaluated several existing accreditation organizations and ultimately selected AAAASF because they were willing to include: 1) the AAPD's input to establish the dental accreditation standards, 2) pediatric dentists on the evaluation teams that go into offices and 3) pediatric dentists on their advisory board
- 2. Why AAAASF?** AAAASF's Standards, viewed by many as the Gold Standard, may be considered the strongest of any agency that accredits ambulatory surgery facilities. Credentialing requires 100% compliance with each standard to become and remain accredited. AAPD had significant input in coordination with AAAASF to develop the adopted Pediatric Dental Standards. There is no other independent accreditation organization that has standards tailored for pediatric dentistry.
- 3. Is it mandatory to become accredited?** NO, this voluntary accreditation process by an independent organization is part of a safety effort by the AAPD since 2017. Pediatric dentistry has seen a significant shift toward general anesthesia and deep sedation services offered in dental offices. State regulatory agencies/boards have increasingly required further oversight for these anesthesia services. The intent is to establish an accreditation process developed specifically for pediatric dentistry.
- 4. Is this a new collaboration?** AAPD is in the third year of this collaboration with AAAASF. For example, AAAASF had an exhibit booth at the 2019 AAPD Annual Session in Chicago and at the Fall 2019 Safety Symposium in Chicago. Initial work required the training of a cadre of pediatric dentists to serve as evaluators/site visitors. With the training of initial pediatric dentist evaluators/site visitors completed, the AAPD had planned a "hard launch" of the program at the 2020 Annual Session in Nashville. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and transition of the 2020 Annual Session to a virtual format, the official launch of the program was postponed until the fall of 2020.
- 5. Is the AAPD benefiting monetarily from this collaboration with the AAAASF?** NO. The AAPD receives no royalties or any other payments from this program. The biggest benefit is the potential of increased safety for its members, their employees, and the patients they serve.
- 6. How often are participating practices inspected?** Every three years, and self-evaluation occurs yearly.
- 7. My state doesn't require accreditation. Why should I consider it?** General Anesthesia and deep sedation are increasingly transitioning into dental offices as operating room access in hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers is becoming more limited. Practitioners and the public demand greater demonstrations of safety by independent facility accreditation. State agencies/boards in many cases are applying their hospital/surgery center model requirements and not making modifications applicable to dentistry. States Health Boards and State Dental Boards across the U.S. are increasingly requiring independent accreditation/permitting for general anesthesia, deep sedation and moderate sedation services provided in offices and outside of hospitals/ surgery centers. Here is an opportunity to become accredited within a structure created for pediatric dentistry.
- 8. Who can apply?** Any outpatient pediatric dentistry facility interested in standing out as a practice that exhibits the highest standard of care for their patients.
- 9. If I don't pursue this accreditation, is my risk of liability increased?** The standard of patient care in a pediatric dental practice is determined by several factors, including adherence to AAPD best practices and clinical practice guidelines. Accreditation does not change the standard of care, but may prove helpful for a pediatric dental practice to demonstrate to the public and regulators that an independent agency has reviewed your practice as meeting the very highest standard of safety.
- 10. Will all pediatric dental offices need to be accredited in order to be reimbursed by third-party payers?** No, and the AAPD would strongly oppose any such proposal.
- 11. How to apply?** Review the Outpatient Pediatric Dentistry Standards and Manual and submit the new applicant materials to AAAASF at 7500 Grand Ave, Suite 200, Gurnee, IL 60031 or fax to (847) 775-1985 or alternatively scan and send to reception@aaaasf.org. Your documentation will be reviewed within 10 days.

Application materials: Standards Manual and Checklist V1, HIPAA Business Agreement, Random Case Review Form, Authorization to Release Form, Facility Identification Form, Staff Identification Form, Director Attestation Form.