

# Early Orthodontic Treatment Means A Smile For Life

By Nancy Eagleton

Dr. Raul Gonzalez, director of Smile Studio Associates Dentistry, believes that Oral good oral health and a happy smile for life begins during childhood.

Gonzalez tells parents that it is important for children to have an orthodontic evaluation at an early age, and he is not alone in this thinking. The American Association of Orthodontics (AAO) recommends that all children receive an orthodontic screening by age seven.

“Permanent teeth usually begin to come in at age six or seven and this is the time that orthodontic problems become apparent,” said Gonzalez. “It’s a good age to evaluate a child’s total Oral health and determine what orthodontic treatment, if any, many are needed.”

“Orthodontic treatment in young children is known as interceptive orthodontics. At a young age, tooth development and jaw growth are not complete, so the problem of crowding is easier to address. Early intervention treatments may help teeth to emerge into the proper positions, which may simplify and shorten any future orthodontic treatments.

“Fitting children with mobile (removable) appliances such as palatal expanders can expand the upper arch and make room for the permanent teeth,” said Gonzalez.

Early treatment, while the jaw is still growing, may also eliminate the practice of rapid orthodontics, which is when permanent teeth are removed.

“I’m not a fan of rapid orthodontics,” said Gonzalez. “Don’t lose those bicuspids; you need those teeth for a proper bite.” Gonzalez adds that early intervention options are very affordable and the money invested today often will

save money in the long run. Another position result of early orthodontic treatment is the marked increase in children's self confidence.

"I find that these younger kids feel privileged to play an active role in their own health," he said. "We coach kids in sports and to do well in school, so it's important to coach them to take care of themselves and their Oral health."

Unfortunately, because of busy schedules and increased stress on families and children, Gonzalez says has seen an increase in general dental neglect.

"Everyone is so busy, so dental appointments get cancelled and postponed," he said. "When these children are finally brought in, they have gingivitis, cavities and I may discover that they've been grinding their teeth. More children are suffering from allergies, which lead to open mouth breathing and airway obstruction, which then may lead to bite problems. When children don't feel well, they don't eat or sleep well, and the stress may lead to teeth grinding, which causes headaches. General health and oral health issues are all connected."

Gonzalez is optimistic that he can make a change by educating parents and Smile Studio Associates Dentistry specializes in treating the entire family at every stage of oral health.

"Turn every page at the right stage and at the end of the book, the child's story will be a good," he said.

Take advantage that summer is around the corner to come and see the dentist..