Teaching children good oral health habits helps them grow into healthier adults.

Dr. Mary L. Marazita says: "While the circumstances needed to be addressed at a very young age, including universal access to dental care — Dr. Marazita's research shows there is an oral developmental gap between white and other racial groups-based oral health habits.

Giving your child good oral health habits includes:

1. Brushing and Flossing:
   - Start brushing at the age of two years to establish a routine.
   - Brush teeth twice daily, preferably in the morning and before bedtime.
   - Use a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste to prevent tooth decay.
   - Teach your child to brush in a circular motion for about 2 minutes at a time.
   - Floss daily to remove food and plaque from between teeth.

2. Healthy Diet:
   - Encourage a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
   - Limit sugary drinks and snacks, as they can cause tooth decay and contribute to weight gain.
   - Choose water as a healthier alternative to sugary beverages.

3. Regular Dental Checkups:
   - Take your child to the dentist regularly, starting from the first tooth appears.
   - Checkups include dental exams, cleanings, and fluoride treatments.

4. Early Intervention:
   - Address oral health problems early to prevent more serious issues.
   - Visit a dentist regularly and follow up as recommended by your child’s dentist.

5. Parental Involvement:
   - Be a role model by practicing good oral health habits yourself.
   - Teach your child the importance of oral health by making it a part of daily routines.

"Good oral health begins with the parents," says Dr. Marazita. "It’s important for parents to prioritize their own oral health to ensure they are setting a good example for their children. By taking responsibility for their own oral health, parents can help their children develop positive habits that will last a lifetime.

Dr. Adriana Mendoza says: "Taking oral healthcare to the streets is a vital component of ensuring universal access to dental care to underserved populations. It’s not just about providing care, but also about addressing the systemic barriers that prevent people from accessing healthcare. By reaching out to communities where dental care is not readily available, we can make a significant impact in improving oral health outcomes."