

Dr. Soledad Razuri

As a pediatric dentist for more than 10 years, Dr. Razuri sees the pain caused by early childhood dental decay on a daily basis. With a cavity rate among Arizona children that is three times the national average, she has seen patients as young as two years old in need of root canals and extractions. "It breaks my heart," says Razuri, who practices in Scottsdale. "These children can't express the pain they feel, and their dental problems put quite a stress on the parents as well." With poor oral health contributing to problems with nutrition, speech development, and self-esteem, Dr. Razuri wants parents to know that in the long-run, it is cheaper, easier and wiser to take your child to the dentist for a preventative check up by age one.

Dr. William Heimann

Dr. Heimann has been a pediatric dentist in the Valley for nearly three decades. Since he started his private practice, the Phoenix-based dentist has seen an alarming increase in tooth decay among preschool children. "Families need to be aware that decay can start at a very young age," says Heimann, who has treated oral health issues in children as young as 15 months old. "Early prevention is key. There is still the misconception that baby teeth aren't important. Nothing could be farther from the truth." If there is one thing Dr. Heimann wants Arizona parents to know, it is that poor oral health negatively impacts a child's overall well-being on many levels, and that visiting a dentist isn't as difficult as many people believe.

Fabiola Villalobos

As a parent of a 3-year-old boy, Fabiola Villalobos knows the importance of early childhood dental visits. When her son Jose was only two and half years old, she noticed he was having difficulty eating and pieces of his baby teeth began to fall off. Worse yet, she could tell he was in pain – a heartbreaking situation for a parent. She immediately contacted a dentist, who reviewed Jose and treated his tooth decay. Since then, Fabiola reports that Jose is pain free and in good health. Fabiola wants other parents to know how important it is to take their children to a dentist at a young age, and she hopes others will learn from Jose's situation.

Tychelle Smith

Tychelle learned first-hand the importance of early childhood dental visits when she noticed her 2-year-old daughter Tya was experiencing pain while eating and brushing her teeth. Without fluoride in the water where they used to live, Tychelle says the decay in Tya's mouth was rapid and extensive, and her teeth were becoming discolored. Tya had her teeth pulled, filled and capped to repair the damage, and she also began a fluoride treatment to prevent future decay. Since then, things have gotten much better for Tya. "I used to have to force her to brush her teeth because of the pain it caused, but now it is something she enjoys," says Tychelle, who noticed a difference in Tya's demeanor almost immediately after treatment. "As soon as she got the work done, she was totally different. She was just happier in general." Tychelle wants parents to learn from her situation. "The earlier, the better" when it comes to dental visits, Tychelle reminds parents, and she stresses that oral health issues like Tya's can appear at a moment's notice.