

Pediatric Dentist

The dentist for babies, children and teenagers. Two to three extra years after dental school, mostly spent learning how to handle a frightened kid.

TYPICAL PAY

\$227,690

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$107k to \$239k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

10 to 11 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Private pediatric practices, children's hospitals, community h...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Biology, chemistry and physics, plus anything that trains your hands. Dexterity is tested at admission.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
 Any major, as long as you finish the pre-dental science courses and sit the Dental Admission Test (DAT).
- 3 Dental school** 4 years
 Four years ending in a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD). The two degrees are equivalent, and which one you get depends on the school.
- 4 Pediatric dentistry residency** 2 to 3 years
 An advanced program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation, covering behavior guidance, sedation, hospital dentistry and children with special health care needs.
- 5 License and board certification** After residency
 A state dental license is required to practice. Board certification by the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry is voluntary and takes a written qualifying exam plus an oral clinical exam.

Pros and cons

- + High income with genuinely civilized hours
- + Kids get better fast, and you see the result
- + You can own the business and set your own schedule
- Ten years of school and often \$300,000 or more of debt
- Some days are crying, kicking and parents who are angrier than the child
- Physically hard on your back, neck and hands over decades

Optional boosts

Board certification. Sedation and general anesthesia training. Special health care needs. A second specialty in orthodontics.

Good to know

The first visit is meant to be at age one

American pediatric dentistry guidance puts the first dental visit at the eruption of the first tooth or the first birthday, whichever comes first. Most families arrive years later than that.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease...

It outranks asthma in American children, and it is almost entirely preventable. That gap is the reason this specialty exists.

Where these numbers come from

O*NET OnLine: Dentists, All Other Specialists (29-1029.00)
 The American Board of Pediatric Dentistry
 American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
 Commission on Dental Accreditation

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/pediatric-dentist>



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