



## When Should Your Child Visit The Orthodontist?

(NAPSA)—While there's no "exact age" for a child to begin orthodontic treatment, there are a few things to consider.

Suggests Dr. DeWayne B. McCamish, president of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), "Somewhere between the seventh and eighth birthdays is generally when a child should visit an orthodontist. If a parent is concerned about something they observe, it's quite alright to bring in an even younger child.

"The orthodontist assesses the 'bite'—meaning how the teeth come together. There is a wealth of information we can gather just from watching how a child brings the teeth together. Some problems reveal themselves at an early age, and some of these problems can be addressed while a child still has some baby teeth."

### What To Watch For

These signs suggest you should consult an orthodontist:

- Early or late loss of baby teeth;
- Difficulty in chewing or biting;
- Mouth breathing;
- Thumb sucking;
- Crowding, misplaced or blocked-out teeth;
- Jaws that shift or make sounds;
- Speech difficulties;
- Biting the cheek or tongue;
- Teeth that meet abnormally, or don't meet at all;
- Facial features that are out of proportion to each other;
- Jaws that are too far forward or too far back;
- Grinding or clenching the teeth.

Most children begin orthodontic treatment between the ages of 9 and 14.

### Benefits of Early Evaluation

A check-up with an orthodontist while some baby teeth are still present can be beneficial for youngsters and their parents. "If we determine that treatment will be needed, an early check-up allows the orthodontist to



**All children should get a check-up with an orthodontist at the first recognition of an orthodontic problem but no later than age seven.**

recommend the most appropriate treatment at the most appropriate time. We can also talk with parents about budgeting for treatment, based on their individual circumstances. Orthodontists routinely offer a variety of payment plans, and parents can look into benefits to reduce their out-of-pocket expenditures such as insurance, flexible spending accounts and health savings accounts," according to Dr. McCamish. Many AAO members offer low-cost or complimentary initial consultations and a referral to an orthodontist is not necessary.

### What an Orthodontist Is

Orthodontists first graduate from dental school, and then go on for an additional two-to-three academic years of study at an accredited orthodontic residency program to become orthodontists. Only orthodontists can be AAO members. You can be sure that you are being treated by an orthodontic specialist when you see the AAO logo.

### Learn More

For further information or to find nearby AAO orthodontists, visit [mylifesmile.org](http://mylifesmile.org).