



## Helping Iowans Like Jason

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When he gets home from school, 5-year-old Jason A. doesn't head for a snack or the TV. Instead, Jason rushes to the sink to brush his teeth.

His teacher, Leigh Turner, knows it's about more than a toothbrush. "It's about independence," she said. "Kids feel special when they have something of their own, something that helps them take care of themselves. The importance of daily brushing is talked about every day in school," Leigh said. "We make a point to talk about it as part of our routine."

Because of a partnership between Head Start, the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, and the Siouxland Community Health Center, Jason and his classmates receive toothbrushes, dental care instructions, access to dentists and "school toothbrushes" for use during the school day.

"We often use their mom as an example of why it's so important to go to the dentist," said Jason's dad, Mario. "She just lost a tooth as an adult, and we don't want our kids to have the same problems we have."

Because of good dental health habits, Jason has a lot of confidence when visiting the dentist. "The dentist does a really good job of making the kids feel comfortable," Mario said. "Jason goes back for his checkups by himself now, and doesn't even hesitate."