

Dentist soothes kids with special needs

Repetitive-task approach lets children build up to teeth cleaning

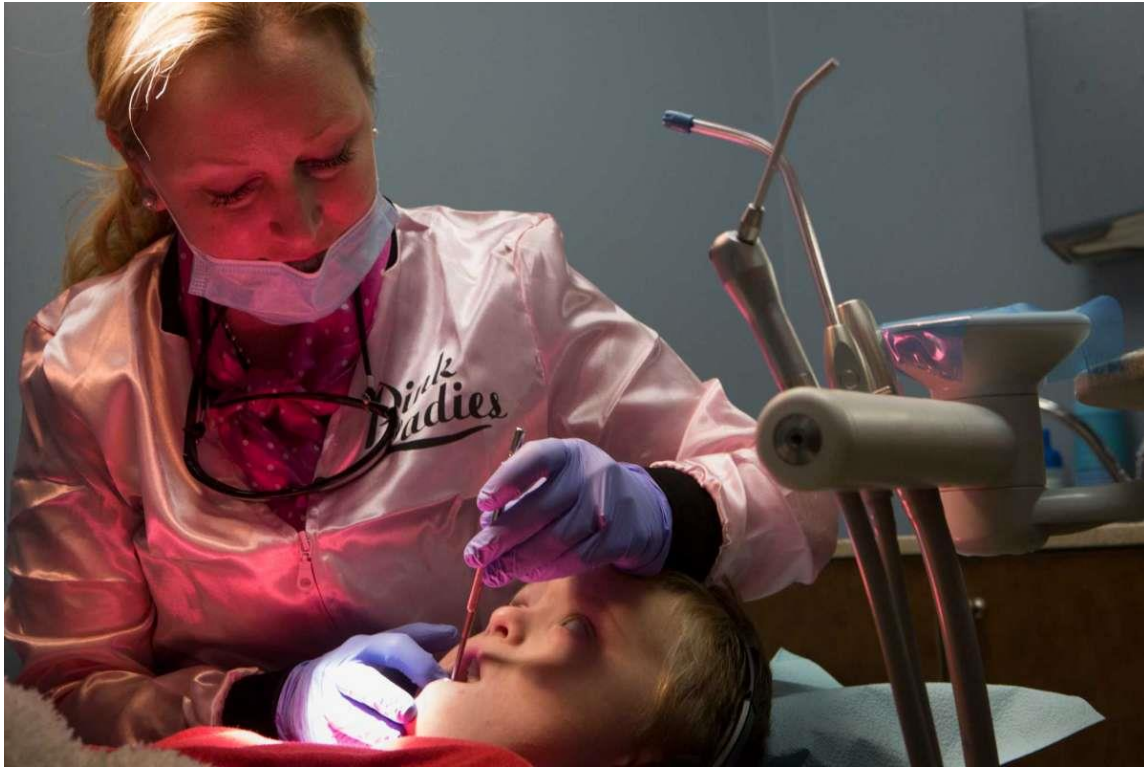


Rebecca Elliott_Nov. 8, 2014

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1of3Seth Skaggs, 6, shows off his clean teeth to his mother, Emily Skaggs, after his first full oral health evaluation on Oct. 28.Photo: Marie D. De Jesus, Staff



2of3Pediatric dentist Amy Luedemann-Lazar evaluates Seth Skaggs, 6, during his fourth visit to her office. The first three visits were to help him build up to a teeth cleaning.Photo: Marie D. De Jesus, Staff



3of3 Seth Skaggs, 6, a special needs patient, finds comfort in holding a stuffed animal as pediatric dentist Amy Luedemann-Lazar helps him gradually work up to having his teeth cleaned without restraint or sedation. Photo: Marie D. De Jesus, Staff

Amy Luedemann-Lazar originally disliked working with children with autism - with routine dental procedures becoming "backbreaking" work, given the children's behavioral and communication difficulties.

It wasn't a single turning point, but a series of smaller events that led the 42-year-old pediatric dentist to become one of the leading providers for children with special needs in the Katy area. Among the reasons: She watched a friend raise a daughter with autism, an influx of special needs patients turned up at her office and she was introduced to a program designed to treat patients on the spectrum without restraint or sedation, typical practices in many dental offices.