

# Taking Care of America's Most Vulnerable Population

By Dr. Amy Luedemann-Lazar

The dental industry has grown by leaps and bounds in the comprehensive treatments and services that it is able to provide for patients. With so many technological advancements made in the field, dentists should be able to treat any patient that walks through their door. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Today, [2.8 million children](#) in America have special needs. And when it comes to a routine dental visit, many parents must find a specialist who has the necessary equipment and expertise to treat their child. I have found that parents of children with special needs have two underlying concerns.

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The first is that dentists often have to put patients with special needs under general anesthesia for the duration of the treatment. Although general anesthesia is typically [safe](#), there are some risks involved that many parents (and dentists) are not willing to take. Additionally, when parents have a child who is nonverbal, they are often concerned about knowing if their child is in pain and are looking for gentler dental tools. Children without special needs may even feel anxious about their first time going to the dentist, and nonverbal children have an added layer of anxiety. Due to these concerns, it can be very difficult for parents to find accommodating dentists who have the specialized experience and equipment needed to treat their child safely.

One recent example from my practice that illustrates the lack of treatment options for patients with special needs is [Mason Motz's story](#). Mason was born with Sotos Syndrome and his parents, Dalan and Meredith, had trouble finding a local dentist willing and capable of treating him. Instead, they had to drive close to an hour to come to our specialized clinic at [Kidstown Dental](#). Once in our office, Mason was treated with the BIOLASE diode laser with great results. Unfortunately, the Motz family is not alone, and this problem persists throughout the nation. There is a serious lack of availability of care for patients with special needs. As a pediatric dentist focused on integrating technologies and methodologies to create the best possible environment and experience for each child's individual needs, it is my mission to make sure parents and patients are taken care of.

At Kidstown Dental, we are able to allay the existing concerns that many parents face with experienced staff and cutting-edge technologies. Our doctors have significant experience treating children with special needs, and they bring this expertise to the care they provide for our young patients. It is imperative that when putting children under general anesthesia, the team administering the treatment is highly trained. Additionally, we use only the most cutting-edge technologies that can perform non-invasive dental treatments, such as our Waterlase dental laser suite. Dental lasers not only benefit our patients with gentle treatments that cause little-to-no discomfort and often do not require general anesthesia, but they also benefit parents who can be at ease when we treat their children.

As an example, frenectomies, or tongue-tie procedures, are being treated more commonly in the dental chair. Frenectomies are traditionally performed using a scalpel to release the tongue or lip, which is painful for the patient and increases recovery time. The Waterlase dental laser changed the game for my patients, using highly-pressurized water to release the tongue or lip that not only makes a much smaller incision, but reduces recovery time for the patient. I even had babies sleep through the procedure! In cases such as Mason's, the Waterlase dental laser was able to not only alleviate his severe tongue-tie, but it was able to do so in a way that reduced the pain and recovery time typically involved. Rather than being concerned post-treatment that their children are in pain, parents can rely on the innovative technologies that we use to deliver gentle treatments that will keep their children in as much comfort as possible.

In addition, ensuring that we have the most advanced technologies to offer the best treatments available, we have utilized the [D-Termined Program](#), which was created by Dr. David Tesini. The initiative is designed for children on the autism spectrum, enabling them to master the skills for a successful dental visit. The implementation of this program has allowed our dentists to better accommodate children and families living with autism and better serve this community.

We are proud to be able to provide this level of service to our patients. Through our highly specialized team, customized programs and cutting edge technology, the Kidstown Dental team is successfully meeting the needs of the special needs community.