



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Illinois kids rake in more than \$10 million for lost teeth last year**  
*Delta Dental survey shows average Tooth Fairy gift tracked with S&P 500*

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. – Feb. 23, 2017** – An unlikely but accurate economic indicator, Tooth Fairy payouts are soaring with the going rate for a lost baby tooth in the Midwest increasing from \$3.11 in 2015 to \$4.04 in 2016. According to the [Original Tooth Fairy Poll](#), sponsored by Delta Dental, kids in Illinois raked in a whopping \$10.2 million for lost teeth last year.

Nationally, parents reported an all-time high of \$4.66 per lost tooth in 2016, up from \$3.91 in 2015. The Tooth Fairy paid an estimated \$290.6 million nationally for lost teeth, increasing 13.5 percent from the prior year.

The increased Tooth Fairy giving could mean even better things to come for the economy. The Original Tooth Fairy Poll has served as a good indicator of the economy's overall direction, tracking with the movement of Standard & Poor's 500 Index (S&P 500) for 12 of the past 13 years. This year's poll shows Tooth Fairy payouts are nearly right on target, with a 19.18 percent increase for lost teeth while the S&P 500 saw an increase of 19.61 percent.

Cash payouts for a child's first lost tooth, typically higher than the average giving rate, are also up 20 percent in the Midwest from \$4.74 in 2015 to \$5.70 last year. Nationally, the payout for a first tooth increased from \$5.21 to \$5.72.

"In addition to the excitement a visit from the Tooth Fairy brings, she also delivers lessons in finance and good oral health," said Dr. Katina Spadoni, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. "Teaching children about good oral health, from an early age, can help establish strong habits for a lifetime. The Tooth Fairy can be a great way to help spark those conversations."

According to the poll, the Tooth Fairy visits 85 percent of the nation's households with children; and in 89 percent of those homes, leaves money. By region, Tooth Fairy payouts are highest in the West: \$5.96 (\$6.89 for the first tooth); followed by the Northeast at \$5.08 (\$6.31); the South at \$4.57 (\$4.88); and the Midwest at \$4.04 (\$5.70).

An even split of children save (48 percent) and spend (48 percent) Tooth Fairy cash; however, 3 percent actually donate the money, and a savvy 1 percent even loan out the cash.

In addition to money, the Tooth Fairy often leaves gifts that strengthen children's oral health habits, giving toothbrushes (38 percent), dental floss (21 percent) and toothpaste (22 percent).

For more information about the Original Tooth Fairy Poll and ways to make your child's Tooth Fairy experience extra special, visit [OriginalToothFairyPoll.com](http://OriginalToothFairyPoll.com).

**About Delta Dental of Illinois**

*Delta Dental of Illinois is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and families, and more than 6,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. Delta Dental of Illinois covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members nationwide. Delta Dental of Illinois is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.*

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*About the Survey: The Original Tooth Fairy Poll was conducted between January 24<sup>th</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, among a nationally representative sample of 1,588 parents of children ages 6-12. The margin of error is +/- 2.5 percent.*