

Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) Notification Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Having a healthy mouth helps your child do well in school. To make sure your child is ready for school, California law *Education Code* Section 49452.8 requires **every kindergartner in public school and only those first graders who were not in public school the prior year** to have an **oral health assessment/ screening** or dental check-up turned into their school **at the beginning of the school year**. **Transitional kindergartners (TK)** can also complete the assessment.

The Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Form (attached to this letter) needs to be completed by a licensed dentist or other licensed or registered dental health professional. If your kindergartner or first grader enrolling in public school for their first year **has not** had the form completed by a dentist in the past 12 months, please go to their dentist to get it completed, and return it to your child's school.

If you cannot take your child to a dentist to get the oral health assessment/ screening, or if your child cannot attend an oral health screening event hosted at your school, please visit our webpage here for help in finding a dentist: <https://www.smchealth.org/accessing-oral-health-care>. Or, you may complete the separate **Waiver of Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Requirement form (attached to this letter)**, and return it to your child's school. You can get copies of all these forms from your child's school.

Your child's identity will not be in any report. Schools keep students' health information private.

If your child does not have health or dental insurance:

Contact San Mateo County's **Health Coverage Unit** by calling toll free:
1-800-223-8383.

Local number: **650-616-2002**.

Email: info-hcu@mscgov.org.

Visit the website: <http://www.smchealth.org/health-insurance>.



To find a dental provider accepting Health Plan of San Mateo Dental (HPSM Dental):

Call the **Health Plan of San Mateo's Dental Line**: 650-616-1522

Email: Dental@hpsm.org.

Visit HPSM Dental's webpage: <https://www.hpsm.org/member/hpsm-dental>



To find a dental provider accepting Kaiser Foundation Health Plan:

Call the Medi-Cal Dental Customer Service Center: 1-800-322-6384 (TTY 1-800-735-2922).

Visit the Medi-Cal Dental (Smile, California) webpage: <https://smilecalifornia.org/find-a-dentist/>

For additional oral health information and resources:

Visit the Oral Public Health Program website: <http://www.smchealth.org/oral-health>.

We want your child to be healthy and ready for school! Here is important advice to help your child stay healthy:

- Baby teeth are very important, even though they fall out. Children need healthy baby teeth to eat, talk, smile, and feel good about themselves. Children with cavities may have pain, difficulty eating, stop smiling, and have problems paying attention and learning at school.
- Take your child to the dentist **every six months, starting when their first baby tooth comes in**. Dental check-ups can help keep your child's mouth healthy and free of pain, and are covered by dental insurance plans.
- Choose healthy foods and drinks for the entire family, like fresh fruits and vegetables, water and milk.
- Help your child brush their teeth at least 2 times a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride for 2 minutes, and floss daily.
- Limit candy and sweet drinks like punch, juice or soda. Sweet drinks and candy contain a lot of sugar, which causes cavities and leaves less room for your child to have healthy foods and drinks. Sweet drinks and candy can also cause weight problems, which may lead to other diseases, such as diabetes
- **Fluoride** is an important mineral that your child needs because it makes their teeth stronger and protects them from cavities. It is found in safe amounts in our drinking water and in toothpaste. Your dentist may recommend your child also receive **fluoride treatments, like "fluoride varnish."** Fluoride varnish is painless and painted on their teeth. If your family drinks mostly bottled water, your child may not be getting enough fluoride from water to protect their teeth. **Fluoride treatments are free services covered by HPSM Dental every 6 months, or more frequently if your child has a higher risk of tooth decay.**
- **"Sealants"** are painless, clear coatings ("seals") put on your child's permanent back teeth (molars). They are recommended for all children because they protect teeth from harmful bacteria and cavities, and they last for several years. **Sealants are covered by insurance for kids.**

If you have questions about the oral health assessment requirement, please contact your child's school.