**Letter templates from local health jurisdictions and/or local educational agencies addressed to:**

WIC, HV programs, Early Care & Education partners

***Objective:* Raise awareness of WIC, Home Visiting Programs, Early Care & Education Partners about importance of oral health and to provide resources they can also share with parents.**

***Notes:* This template requires you to customize by entering the name of your County and the template below shared with parents, as well as any additional resources your local oral health program has shared with these sites that may be helpful. Review all the highlighted sections to determine how to customize for your county and audience.**

Dear [insert WIC/HV/ECE name here],

On behalf of the [XX] County Oral Health Program, I’m asking for your help to ensure that young children in our county have healthy smiles.

Tooth decay and childhood cavities are one of the most common, yet preventable dental issues affecting children. It is also one of the leading reasons why children miss school. It can be incredibly difficult to concentrate in school or to play with friends with a toothache that makes it difficult to eat, talk, or smile. Oral health is important to overall health, and [XX] County is working to ensure that younger children have healthy smiles to stay in school ready to learn.

Our oral health program has a goal to ensure that every young child has a regular dental provider and ‘dental home’ that provides preventive care and addresses dental health issues quickly. A key part of our strategy is to ensure that parents have access to the information and resources they need to ensure that their child has a dental provider and understands that baby teeth are important to keep healthy. To that end, and in recognition of February being children’s dental health month, we have attached a suggested letter template for you to customize and send to parents of the young children you serve. We encourage you to use February to raise awareness and educate parents about the importance of baby teeth and to establish a dental home for their child(ren). The letter also lists resources such as websites and phone numbers to assist parents.

Thank you for your help. For more information about the [XX] County Oral Health Program, including our oral health community improvement plan, please visit [insert website here] and/or contact me if you have any questions at [contact info here].

Sincerely,

[LOHP or other LHJ representative]

***Separate attachment addressed to:*** Parents/Caregivers at WIC, HV programs, Early Care & Education partners

Dear Parents,

Did you know that tooth decay and childhood cavities are one of the most common, yet preventable dental issues affecting children? It is also one of the leading reasons why children miss school. It can be incredibly difficult to concentrate in school or to play with friends with a toothache that makes it difficult to eat, talk, or smile. Oral health is important to overall health, and [XX] the County Oral Health Program is working to ensure that younger children have healthy smiles to stay in school ready to learn.

If your child hasn’t yet visited a dentist, we encourage you to bring them in for a routine check-up and exam. Here are some ways to help prepare your child for a dental visit:

* Talk to them about how a healthy mouth helps to keep their bodies strong. They use their mouth to eat, speak and play with their friends and family.
* Tell your children about the important role that dentists and hygienists play in making sure their mouth and teeth are in good health.
* Review the First 5 California Kit for New Parents, <https://www.first5california.com/en-us/articles/kit-for-new-parents-newborn/> and Toddler Oral Health Information, <https://www.first5california.com/en-us/topics/toddler-oral-health/>.
* [insert additional resources here – e.g. Potter the Otter book if you have them]

The [Smile, CA](https://smilecalifornia.org/) website has lots of [helpful videos](https://smilecalifornia.org/videos/) and tips to help prepare you and your child for a successful visit. If you are a Medi-Cal member, you can also [find a dentist](https://smilecalifornia.org/find-a-dentist/) at [Smile, CA](https://smilecalifornia.org/) for your child if they don’t already have a regular dentist. Please visit <https://smilecalifornia.org/> or call the Telephone Service Center at 1-800-322-6384 for assistance.

Separately, if your child is going to enter Kindergarten next year, be sure to bring your child to a dentist and have them fill out the [Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment form](https://www.ab1433.org/home/reporting) (KOHA) and then turn in this form with the others that your child’s school will require for enrollment.

Thank you for keeping your child’s mouth healthy and ensuring they are at their best to eat, learn and play! If you have any questions about the kindergarten oral health assessment, information shared or need further assistance, please contact [LOHP representative, or best contact here].

Sincerely,

[Local WIC/HV representative/Early Care & Education Director]