



Public Health



MEDIA ALERT FOR THURSDAY, JAN. 30
(City of Ontario)

WANT KIDS TO BRUSH THEIR TEETH?
FIRST 5 SAN BERNARDINO BRINGS THE DENTIST (AND MORE) TO THE CLASSROOM!

"Little Teeth, Big Responsibility" School Visit Kicks Off Children's Dental Health Month with pop-up hygienist, book reading, Potter the Otter and more for young children in Ontario

WHAT: An event at Hawthorne Elementary School in the City of Ontario will bring free dental screenings and more to 48 preschoolers. As part of the "Little Teeth, Big Responsibility" campaign by [First 5 San Bernardino](#) and [Smile SBC](#), the 3- and 4-year-olds will also get a surprise visit from the giant Potter the Otter mascot and a theatrical reading of the popular [Potter the Otter Visits the Dentist](#) book, where they'll learn how to brush and floss. They'll even go home with a toothbrush kit and their very own Potter the Otter Visits the Dentist book!

WHY: **Tooth decay is preventable, but it remains the most common and chronic childhood disease.** Children with poor oral health are more likely to miss school and experience **academic struggles**, with lower grades than their healthier peers. Though baby teeth are temporary, they are important as they help children chew and talk correctly and form healthy adult teeth. A 2018 survey by Smile SBC and the Center for Oral Health indicate that **two out of three kindergarten children in San Bernardino County have already had tooth decay.**

Together, First 5 San Bernardino and Smile SBC share the importance of pediatric oral healthcare every year through their "[Little Teeth, Big Responsibility](#)" campaign in alignment with National Children's Dental Health Month in February. San Bernardino County parents, caregivers and children receive free resources and information about proper oral care for children aged 5 and under.

WHEN: Thursday, January 30, via two sessions perfect for morning or afternoon shows:

Session #1: 9:30 a.m.

Session #2: 1:00 p.m.

WHERE: Hawthorne Elementary School
705 West Hawthorne Street
Ontario, CA 91762

VISUALS

- Dozens of 3- and 4-year-olds receiving free dental screenings by the [Friendly Flosser](#); children receiving brushing and flossing tips as they sit in the dental chair
- A surprise visit by the Potter the Otter mascot, who encourages children to get their dental screening and brush their teeth
- A theatrical reading of Potter the Otter Visits the Dentist, all teaching kids about dental health through song and dance
- Excited students receiving free Potter the Otter Visits the Dentist books, dental report cards and other oral health giveaways to take home

INTERVIEWS:

- Karen Scott, executive director at First 5 San Bernardino, on the importance of seeing a dentist before a child's first birthday or first tooth
- Bonnie Flippin, program coordinator at San Bernardino County Department of Public Health's Smile SBC local oral health program
- Jennifer Nowotney, the Friendly Flosser, about healthy pediatric oral care
- Karen Aristizabal, Hawthorne Elementary School Principal, about what this program means for her students and why it's important for them to teach dental care at such a young age
- A few 3- and 4-year-olds participating in the day's program

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