



Public Health



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **‘Little Teeth, Big Responsibility’ Campaign Urges Parents to Prioritize Early Childhood Oral Health**

*Smile SBC and First 5 San Bernardino partner for the second year in a row to promote National Children’s Dental Health Month*

**SAN BERNARDINO – January 23, 2023:** Smile SBC and First 5 San Bernardino have partnered for the second year in a row to promote National Children’s Dental Health Month with the “Little Teeth, Big Responsibility” campaign. Many parents underestimate the importance of baby teeth, but paying attention to infant and toddler teeth is a direct indicator of lifelong dental health and overall wellbeing.

Tooth decay is preventable, but it remains the most common chronic childhood disease. In fact, more than 60% of – or two out of three – kindergarteners are experiencing tooth decay in San Bernardino County, according to a recent survey by the Center for Oral Health and SmileSBC.

“The ‘Little Teeth, Big Responsibility’ campaign is very important because oral health habits begin at an early age,” shared First 5 San Bernardino Executive Director Karen Scott. “Visiting a dentist when your baby’s first tooth appears or at their first birthday is the best way to ensure a lifetime of healthy smiles.”

Though baby teeth are temporary, they help kids chew correctly, speak correctly and form healthy adult teeth. Smile SBC and First 5 San Bernardino are working to share dental health information and resources with County residents.

Bonnie Flippin, program coordinator of San Bernardino County Department of Public Health’s Smile SBC local oral health program, explained that finding a local dentist that accepts your insurance is easy on their “Find a Dentist” page. Information about assistance with enrollment or transportation is also available on the “Find a Dentist” page.

“To further extend the campaign message, we’re excited to partner with the San Bernardino City Unified School District this year,” Flippin adds. “Working together with a registered hygienist and mobile dental practice, the district is bringing oral health assessments and dental services directly to elementary schools across the school district,” Flippin concludes.

Visit [SmileSBC.org](http://SmileSBC.org) to find a dentist near you and more information on protecting your baby’s oral health. Additional campaign information, including a partner toolkit, can be found at <http://First5SanBernardino.org/OralHealth>.

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### **About Smile SBC**

The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health's Smile SBC program, established in January 2018, aims to work in alignment with and towards achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the California State Oral Health Plan 2018-2028. Smile SBC and local oral health programs like it across the state are funded by the California Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health through funds generated as a result of passage of the California Healthcare, Research and Prevention Tobacco Tax Act of 2016 (Proposition 56). Smile SBC is tasked with improving oral health, especially of vulnerable and high-risk populations, through assessment, planning, health promotion and education, population-level disease control and prevention and capacity-building. The program also focuses on coordinating countywide efforts and building partnerships to ensure county residents have equal opportunities and resources to achieve and maintain optimal oral health. For more information, visit [SmileSBC.org](http://SmileSBC.org).

### **About First 5 San Bernardino**

First 5 San Bernardino's distinct purpose is to improve the lives of young children and their families by giving them the best possible start in life. For the past 23 years, First 5 San Bernardino has been working dynamically through strategic partnerships to promote, support and enhance the health and early development of children prenatal through age 5, their families and communities. Funded through the 1998 voter-approved initiative, California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues), First 5 San Bernardino has evolved into a system where stakeholders and services are integrated, coordinated and sustainable, and one that families experience as accessible, inclusive and equitable. For more information, visit [First5SanBernardino.org](http://First5SanBernardino.org).