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# KINDERGARTEN ORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

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A DIVISION OF  
HEALTH CARE  
SERVICES AGENCY

# KINDERGARTEN ORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

For questions or additional copies, please contact:

San Joaquin County Public Health Services

Local Oral Health Program

420 S. Wilson Way

Stockton, CA 95205

Phone: 209-468-8620

Website: [www.sjcphs.org](http://www.sjcphs.org)

[www.SJTEETH.org](http://www.SJTEETH.org)

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# Introduction

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California State law requires that children have a dental checkup by May 31 of their first year in school. The San Joaquin County Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Handbook is a tool designed to assist school staff in administering the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment requirement. The San Joaquin County Oral Health Program is committed to streamlining the reporting process and encouraging district-wide participation throughout San Joaquin County.

## What are the intended impacts of the oral health assessment?

Tooth decay affects nearly two-thirds of California's children by the time they reach third grade. Although tooth decay is easily preventable, it is also a progressive infection that does not heal without treatment. If tooth decay goes untreated, children may develop infections severe enough to require emergency room treatment. Additionally, their adult teeth may be permanently damaged. The requirement for children entering kindergarten or first grade to have an oral health assessment is intended to:

- 🌱 Raise awareness about the relationship between oral health, overall health, and readiness to learn;
- 🌱 Connect children with dental professionals who can care for their oral health;
- 🌱 Encourage eligible families to enroll in Medi-Cal Dental;
- 🌱 Identify barriers to care to assist families in responding to their children's oral health needs; and,
- 🌱 Provide data to support oral health advocacy.



This requirement intends to help children get the oral health care they need to be healthy and ready for school. The Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment is a great opportunity for parents and guardians to learn about their child's oral health.

## Children's Oral Health

While there are many factors that influence a child's performance and success in school, one of the most important elements is health. The Surgeon General's report on oral health status in the United States reports that the number one chronic disease affecting young children, early childhood caries (dental decay and cavities), is five times more common than asthma<sup>1</sup>. More than half of California's kindergarteners have experienced tooth decay and one in five children in San Joaquin County have untreated decay<sup>2,3</sup>. Children need healthy teeth to eat properly, speak, smile, feel good about themselves and do well in school<sup>1</sup>.

Schools play a vital role in communicating the importance of oral health to parents and to communicate that the information collected and reported is secure. All reasonable efforts to encourage parents to seek a dental check-up for their child and return the state-approved Oral Health Assessment Form (Appendix A), regardless of whether or not the evaluation was completed, are essential to fulfilling the intent of the legislation. In addition, sharing local oral health data with school board members, parent-teacher organizations, community organizations, local dental societies and public health agencies will assist in the development of partnerships and strategies to meet community needs.

## School-Based Oral Health Service Programs

School-based oral health programs are examples of collaborative partnerships formed to improve access to preventive oral health services in San Joaquin County. Services provided by school-based programs range from oral health screenings and application of fluoride varnish to dental cleanings, sealants, and some fillings. All current school-based oral health programs in San Joaquin County provide care-coordination services to assist families in accessing dental care services for their children. These programs also assist schools and districts by offering the screening services necessary for completion of the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Form.

## Oral Health Assessment Legislation

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### AB 1433

California has consistently received one of the lowest rankings in the nation for children's oral health. In response to these disparities, the state enacted AB 1433 in 2005, requiring all children entering public school for the first time, either in kindergarten or first grade, to receive

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). Oral health in America: A report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: U.S. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health.

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Public Health. (2017). Status of oral health in California: Oral disease burden and prevention 2017. Sacramento, CA: U.S.

<sup>3</sup> San Joaquin County Public Health Services. (2018). San Joaquin county oral health needs assessment. Stockton, CA: U.S.

an oral health assessment. This assessment must be completed by a licensed dentist or registered dental hygienist within **12 months before school entry or by May 31** of the child's first year in school. The purpose of this legislation is to help children connect with a dental home early and support their long-term health and academic success. For more information on AB1433, visit <http://www.bit.ly/ab-1433>.

## AB 2630

Passed in September 2024 and effective January 1, 2025, AB 2630 expands the KOHA requirement to include students in Transitional Kindergarten (TK). Under this new law, children entering TK, K, or 1st grade for the first time in public school must complete the oral health assessment requirement. For reporting in the System for California Oral Health Reporting (SCOHR), TK students are included with kindergarteners and not reported as a separate group. When completing KOHA forms, be sure to indicate TK, K, or 1st Grade as appropriate. Although the law requires only one screening between TK and first grade, regular dental care is strongly recommended to support healthy development, reduce absences, and enhance learning. For more information on AB 2630, visit <https://bit.ly/ab-2630>

## SB 379









SB 379, passed in 2017, requires school districts to submit a report to the County Office of Education or to a system designated by the state dental director, or both, by **July 1** of each year (see [System for California Oral Health Reporting](#), pg. 8). Additionally, SB 379 allows schools to provide free oral health assessments at school sites via passive consent. This means, if a school or school district hosts a free oral health event where a licensed dental professional performs an oral health assessment, students shall receive the oral health assessment unless the parent or legal guardian of the student opts out. With passive consent, schools are able to assess a greater number of children and refer children that need dental care to a dentist. SB 379 also requires that school districts include data for the number of assessed children found to have dental caries experience (see below). For more information on SB 379, visit <http://www.bit.ly/sb-379>.



## California Education Code

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California Education Code Section 49452.8 states that all school districts shall submit a report each year to the County Office of Education. The report should include:

-  The total number of pupils in the district, by school, who are subject to the oral health assessment requirement (i.e. the number of kindergarten students plus the number of first grade students who did not attend public school kindergarten).
-  The total number of pupils who present proof of an assessment.
-  The total number of pupils who could not complete an assessment due to financial burden.
-  The total number of pupils who could not complete an assessment due to lack of access to a licensed dentist or other licensed dental health professional.
-  The total number of pupils who could not complete an assessment because their parents or legal guardians did not consent to their child receiving the assessment.
-  The total number of pupils assessed and found to have untreated decay.
-  The total number of pupils who did not return either the assessment form or the waiver request to the school.
-  The total number of pupils assessed and found to have caries experience.

## Schools – Distributing the Forms

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The law requires schools to distribute the state-approved Oral Health Assessment Form to parents who are registering their child in public school for the first time, in either kindergarten or first grade. An Oral Health Notification/Parent Letter (Appendix B) that explains the requirement must accompany the Oral Health Assessment Form and both documents should be distributed to parents by the first month of the school year. Distribution opportunities include enrollment days, kindergarten orientation, and back-to-school nights. Schools can download the Oral Health Assessment Form and the Oral Health Notification/Parent Letter (English and Spanish versions) by visiting the California Department of Education Oral Health Assessment page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/oralhealth.asp>.

**Translation Note to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs):** As a form of assistance to LEAs, the California Department of Education (CDE) offers form translations free of charge. Because there can be variations in translation, the CDE recommends that LEAs confer with local translators to determine any need for additions or modification, including the addition of local contact

information or local data, or modification in language to suit the needs of specific language groups in the local community. If you have comments or questions regarding the translations, please e-mail the Clearinghouse for Multilingual Documents (CMD) at [cmd@cde.ca.gov](mailto:cmd@cde.ca.gov).

## Information for Parents

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### What are parents/guardians expected to do once they receive the Oral Health Assessment Form?

- 🌱 If the child has not received a dental exam within the last 12 months, parents/guardians should schedule a dental examination with their regular dentist.
- 🌱 If the child has seen a dentist within the last 12 months, the parent/guardian should ask the dentist's office to complete the required form based on the child's last regular exam.
- 🌱 If the child has seen a dentist within the last 12 months, but cannot get the dentist to fill out the required form, the parent should submit documentation that the child has completed a dental exam (i.e. dental visit treatment form from the dentist's office that includes the same information as the Oral Health Assessment Form).

### What if a child does not have a dental care provider or his/her family cannot afford an oral health assessment?

All children should obtain an oral health assessment from a licensed dental professional. If a child does not have a regular source of dental care or if their family cannot afford an oral health assessment, please see the San Joaquin County Dental Resource Information flyer (Appendix C) for a list of dental care resources available in San Joaquin County or contact your child's school for assistance.

Many schools in San Joaquin County offer free dental screening events and/or participate in school-based oral health programs. Parents can check with their child's school to see if these services are available.







## What if a parent/guardian is unable to get an oral health assessment for their child?

The law recognizes that it may not be possible to get the required dental check-up for a child. On rare occasions, a parent/guardian may have their child excused from the requirement by filling out the bottom portion of the Oral Health Assessment Form. To waive the assessment, the parent/guardian **must** identify on the form what prevented them from getting the dental check-up for the child (i.e. I am unable to find a dental office that will take my child's dental insurance plan, or I cannot afford a dental check-up, etc.). **This information is very important and must be included.** The waiver request must be submitted by **May 31** of the school year.

## Acceptable Documentation

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Parents need to submit one of the following documents to meet the requirement:

-  The Oral Health Assessment Form completed by a licensed dentist or registered dental hygienist working within their scope of practice.
-  Oral health examination and treatment plan forms provided by a licensed dentist or registered dental hygienist working within their scope of practice that includes the same information listed on the Oral Health Assessment Form.

## Unacceptable Documentation

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Verbal confirmation of obtaining an oral health assessment for a child by their parent or legal guardian *does not* qualify as acceptable documentation. If a parent/guardian is unable to obtain an oral health assessment for their child, the parent/guardian must sign the waiver portion at the bottom of the Oral Health Assessment Form.

The signing of the waiver should **not** be used to avoid the important responsibility of obtaining dental health care services for a child.

## Data Collection and Reporting

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### San Joaquin County Oral Health Program

Below is a *brief* overview of the process for reporting oral health data. In addition to this handbook, San Joaquin County Local Oral Health Program (SJC LOHP) provides trainings and a resource toolkit to assist schools and districts in complying with the mandate. For more information, contact SJC LOHP.

## System for California Oral Health Reporting – SCOHR

SCOHR is a centralized online method of gathering all required student oral health assessment data. Schools and districts can input, manage, and track oral health assessment data. There are two types of accounts available for this purpose. “Participating” schools enter the required data from the Oral Health Assessment form plus demographic information found in Section 1. This gives the participating school the capacity to track the status of forms, upload bulk data, print pre-filled forms, run reports, and more. “Non-Participating” schools have the option of inputting only Sections 2 and 3 of the Oral Health Assessment Form (see California Education Code, page 5). For more SCOHR information or to create an account, visit [www.ab1433.org](http://www.ab1433.org).

**At a minimum, schools and districts must gather and report the *required* data. This process is described below.**

### Schools

Schools are responsible for collecting each student’s Oral Health Assessment Form or signed waiver by **May 31**.



#### Option 1: Participating Schools

Enter data from Oral Health Assessment Form - Sections 1, 2, and 3

-  Enter all data directly into SCOHR by July 1.

#### Option 2: Non-Participating Schools



Enter data from Oral Health Assessment Form - Section 2 and 3 only

-  Enter Section 2 and 3 data directly into SCOHR by July 1 **OR**
-  Complete an Oral Health Data Worksheet (example in Appendix D) and submit to district by last day of school.

### Districts

School districts are responsible to ensure all data from each school in their district is entered into SCOHR. Individual school data should be reported, not a sum of all students in the district.

Enter data from each school into SCOHR, if schools have not done so:

-  Obtain Oral Health Data Worksheet from each school by last day of school.
-  Enter data directly into SCOHR by July 1 (see Schools - Options 1 and 2 above).

### County Office of Education

San Joaquin County Office of Education will access a SCOHR account to monitor compliance from all school districts in the county.

	<b>PARTICIPATING</b> Enter all data into SCOHR (Sections 1, 2 & 3)	<b>NON-PARTICIPATING - A</b> Enter required data into SCOHR (Sections 2 & 3)	<b>NON-PARTICIPATING - B</b> Complete Oral Health Data Worksheet
<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect Oral Health Assessment/Waiver by May 31.</li> <li>• Enter required data plus demographic data directly into SCOHR by July 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect Oral Health Assessment/Waiver by May 31.</li> <li>• Enter required data directly into SCOHR by July 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect Oral Health Assessment/Waiver by May 31.</li> <li>• Tally data into Oral Health Data Worksheet and submit to school district office by last day of school.</li> </ul>
<b>DISTRICTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that all schools in district have reported by July 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that all schools in district have reported by July 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain Oral Health Data Worksheet by last day of school.</li> <li>• Enter required information into SCOHR by July 1.</li> </ul>
<b>COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that all schools in district have reported by July 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that all schools in district have reported by July 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that all schools in district have reported by July 1.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A

### Oral Health Assessment Form

California law (*Education Code* Section 49452.8) states your child must have a dental check-up by May 31 of his/her first year in public school. A California licensed dental professional operating within his scope of practice must perform the check-up and fill out Section 2 of this form. If your child had a dental check-up in the 12 months before he/she started school, ask your dentist to fill out Section 2. If you are unable to get a dental check-up for your child, fill out Section 3.

#### Section 1: Child's Information (Filled out by parent or guardian)

Child's First Name:	Last Name:	Middle Initial:	Child's birth date:
Address:			Apt.:
City:			ZIP code:
School Name:	Teacher:	Grade:	Child's Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Parent/Guardian Name:	Child's race/ethnicity: <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown _____		

#### Section 2: Oral Health Data Collection (Filled out by a California licensed dental professional)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Consider each box separately. Mark each box.

Assessment Date:	Caries Experience (Visible decay and/or fillings present)  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Visible Decay Present:  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Treatment Urgency: <input type="checkbox"/> No obvious problem found <input type="checkbox"/> Early dental care recommended (caries without pain or infection; or child would benefit from sealants or further evaluation) <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent care needed (pain, infection, swelling or soft tissue lesions)
<hr/>			
<b>Licensed Dental Professional Signature</b>		<b>CA License Number</b>	<b>Date</b>

#### Section 3: Waiver of Oral Health Assessment Requirement

To be filled out by parent or guardian asking to be excused from this requirement

Please excuse my child from the dental check-up because: (Check the box that best describes the reason)

- ☐ I am unable to find a dental office that will take my child's dental insurance plan.  
My child's dental insurance plan is:  
☐ Medi-Cal/Denti-Cal ☐ Healthy Families ☐ Healthy Kids ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ None
- ☐ I cannot afford a dental check-up for my child.
- ☐ I do not want my child to receive a dental check-up.
- Optional: other reasons my child could not get a dental check-up: \_\_\_\_\_

If asking to be excused from this requirement: ► \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of parent or guardian** **Date**

The law states schools must keep student health information private. Your child's name will not be part of any report as a result of this law. This information may only be used for purposes related to your child's health. If you have questions, please call your school.

Return this form to the school **no later than May 31** of your child's first school year.

*Original to be kept in child's school record.*

## Appendix B

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### Oral Health Notification / Parent Letter

#### **(USE DISTRICT LETTERHEAD AND COMPLETE APPROPRIATE SECTIONS)**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

To make sure your child is ready for school, California law, *Education Code* Section 49452.8, now requires that your child have an oral health assessment (dental check-up) by May 31 in either kindergarten or first grade, whichever is his or her first year in public school.

A licensed dentist or other licensed or registered dental health professional needs to perform the assessment. If your child has had an assessment within 12 months of entering school, that assessment will meet this requirement. **Schools must receive a signed copy of the required form by May 31.**

If you have a dental provider:

- Take the attached Oral Health Assessment/Waiver Request form to the dental office to be completed at the time of your child's check-up.

If you do not have a dental provider, the following resources can help you find a dentist:

- Medi-Cal Dental  
800-322-6384  
<https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/> or <https://smilecalifornia.org/>
- Child Health & Disability Prevention Program(CHDP)  
209-468-8335  
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp/Pages/default.aspx>
- San Joaquin Dental Society  
209-951-1311  
<https://sjds.org/>
- San Joaquin County Public Health Services  
209-468-8620

<https://cms.sicphs.org/programs-and-services/health-promotion-and-chronic-disease-prevention/local-oral-health-program>

If you cannot take your child for this required assessment, please indicate the reason for this in Section 3 of the form.

California law requires schools to maintain the privacy of students' health information. Your child's identity will not be associated with any report produced as a result of this requirement.

Remember, children must be healthy to learn, and children with cavities are not healthy. Children need their teeth to eat properly, talk, smile, and feel good about themselves. Children with cavities and/or pain may have difficulty eating, stop smiling, and have problems paying attention and learning at school.

Tooth decay is an infection that does not heal and can be painful if left without treatment. If cavities are not treated, children can become sick enough to require emergency room treatment and their adult teeth may be permanently damaged.

Here are some important tips to help your child stay healthy:

1. Brush teeth twice a day for two minutes with fluoride toothpaste;
2. Floss once daily;
3. Eat healthy snacks, like cheese, apples, cucumbers, or carrots;
4. Visit the dentist twice a year for regular check-ups; and,
5. Ask your dentist and doctor about fluoride varnish.

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

Sincerely,

District Superintendent

Attachment



## Appendix C

### San Joaquin County Dental Resource Information

Agency/Organization/Website	Telephone	Services
<b>MEDI-CAL DENTAL</b> <a href="http://www.SmileCalifornia.org">www.SmileCalifornia.org</a> or <a href="https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/">https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/</a>	800-322-6384 TTY: 800-735-2922	Free or low cost medical and dental services for eligible children and adults.
<b>DENTAL CLINICS / FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS</b>  <b>COMMUNITY MEDICAL CENTERS</b> <a href="http://www.communitymedicalcenters.org/">http://www.communitymedicalcenters.org/</a>  <b>GOLDEN VALLEY HEALTH CENTERS</b> <a href="https://www.gvhc.org/locations/manteca/">https://www.gvhc.org/locations/manteca/</a>	209-636-5555 English, Spanish  209-492-2622 English, Spanish	Dental service fees based on income. Medi-Cal Dental accepted.  1031 Waterloo Rd., Stockton, CA 95205 83 W. March Lane, Stockton, CA 95207 (Weberstown) 2135 N. Tracy Blvd., Tracy, CA 95376  302 Northgate Dr., Manteca, CA 95336
<b>SAN RAFAEL'S DENTAL CLINIC</b> <a href="https://smcares.org/">https://smcares.org/</a>	209-467-0774	Dental services for <u>uninsured</u> children and adults. Appointments offered on a weekly basis. 545 W. Sonora St. Stockton, CA 95207
<b>SAN JOAQUIN TREATMENT + EDUCATION FOR EVERYONE ON TEETH + HEALTH (SJ TEETH)</b> <a href="http://www.sjteeth.org/en-us/">http://www.sjteeth.org/en-us/</a>	209-953-5437	Local resource page for oral health information, linkage to care coordination agencies, and help finding a Medi-Cal dental provider.
<b>SAN JOAQUIN DENTAL SOCIETY</b> <a href="https://sids.org/">https://sids.org/</a>	209-951-1311	7849 N. Pershing Ave., Stockton, CA 95207
<b>DELTA PACIFIC DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/dpdha/">https://www.facebook.com/dpdha/</a>	<a href="mailto:dpdha19@gmail.com">dpdha19@gmail.com</a>	



## Appendix D

<b>ORAL HEALTH DATA WORKSHEET</b> 2019-2020 Reporting School Year								
SCHOOL: <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 580px; height: 20px;"></span>								
CDS CODE	SCHOOL DISTRICT				SUPERINTENDENT			
ADDRESS					ZIP CODE	COUNTY		
PERIOD COVERED		SUPERVISOR OF HEALTH				OFFICE PHONE	EMAIL	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<b>GRADES</b>	Number of Pupils First Year Attending Public School	Number of Pupils Proof of Assess- ment	Number of Pupils COULD NOT COMPLETE DUE TO FINANCIAL BURDEN	Number of Pupils COULD NOT COMPLETE DUE TO LACK OF ACCESS TO DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL	Number of Pupils COULD NOT COMPLETE DUE TO LACK OF PARENTAL CONSENT	Number of Pupils ASSESSED WITH UNTREATED DECAY	Number of Pupils WHO DID NOT RETURN ASSESSMENT FORM OR WAIVER	Number of Pupils ASSESSED WITH CARIES EXPERIENCE
Kindergarten								
1st Grade <small>(Did not attend public school kindergarten)</small>								
<b>TOTALS</b>	0 . 0	0 . 0	0 . 0	0 . 0	0 . 0	0 . 0	0 . 0	0 . 0
<div style="text-align: right; margin-bottom: 10px;"> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-bottom: 10px;">           Signature of Individual Completing Report         </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-bottom: 10px;">           Print Name: <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 280px; height: 20px;"></span> </div> <div style="text-align: right;">           Title: <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 300px; height: 20px;"></span> </div> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 20px;">Education Code Section 49452.8 states that all school districts shall, by May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, submit a report to the County Office of Education of the county in which the school district is located.</p>								

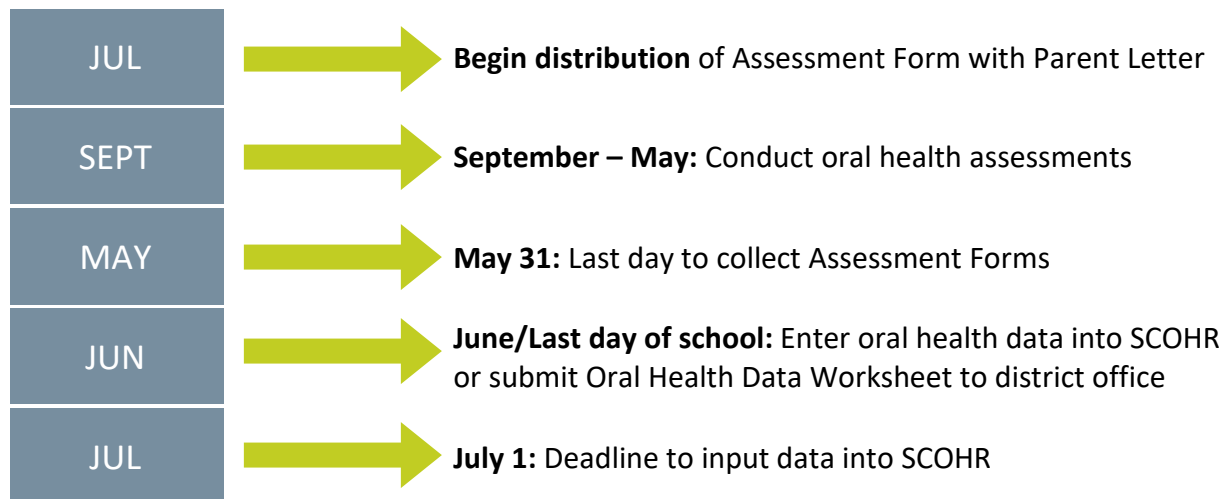
To access SCOHR (System for California Oral Health Reporting)  
<https://www.ab1433.org/>

## Appendix E

### Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment Checklist and Timeline

Staff Responsible \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Review Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) Handbook
- ☐ Begin distribution of KOHA Forms at enrollment or within 1<sup>st</sup> month of school
- ☐ Assist families with access to care if needed (see San Joaquin County Resource Form)
- ☐ Collect completed KOHA Forms by May 31 of each year
- ☐ Enter oral health data in SCOHR or complete Oral Health Data Worksheet and submit to district office by last day of school (**Last Day of School:** \_\_\_\_\_)



#### Where to Go For Resources

Oral Health Assessment Forms (English and six other languages)  
Parent Letters (English and six other languages)  
Find a Dentist in San Joaquin County  
Checklist and Timeline  
[School Based School Linked Program - SBSL and KOHA](#)