

1 [Recognizing Children’s Dental Health Month - February 2026]

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3 **Resolution recognizing the month of February 2026 as Children’s Dental Health Month**
4 **in the City and County of San Francisco.**

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6 WHEREAS, Although 100% preventable, caries (cavities or tooth decay) is the most
7 common chronic disease in children in the United States and can persist into adulthood and
8 across the lifespan; and

9 WHEREAS, If left untreated, tooth decay can result in pain and infection affecting a
10 child’s self-esteem, their ability to focus and attend school, and their ability to sleep and eat;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Research shows that poor oral health in children is significantly associated
13 with absenteeism and poor academic performance; and

14 WHEREAS, In California, children miss an estimated 869,202 school days due to
15 dental problems, costing school districts approximately \$60 million; and

16 WHEREAS, Poor dental health can be costly to families, the healthcare system, and
17 the government; and

18 WHEREAS, The cost of emergency dental care is approximately 10 times more than
19 the cost of early childhood caries preventive dental care (\$6,498 vs. \$660); and

20 WHEREAS, Preschool children enrolled in Medi-Cal that receive an early preventive
21 dental visit are more likely to receive additional preventive services throughout childhood and
22 have lower overall dental expenditures; and

23 WHEREAS, A report from the Surgeon General Tooth classified tooth decay as the
24 single most prevalent chronic childhood disease, more common than asthma and hay fever;
25 and

1 WHEREAS, In the 2024-2025 school year, the rate of caries experience was 26.6%
2 among kindergarten children enrolled in SFUSD schools; and

3 WHEREAS, Profound disparities persists, especially among children of color with the
4 rate of untreated tooth decay among Black or African American children (27.2%) is more than
5 3.5 times higher than the rate of untreated decay among their White counterparts (7.1%); and

6 WHEREAS, The rate of caries experience also varied by zip code, where
7 neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Mission, and the Bayview Hunters Point continue to bear
8 the highest burden of tooth decay, disproportionately impacting African American, Asian and
9 Latino children, with Black or African American children experiencing the highest rates of
10 dental decay; and

11 WHEREAS, The mission of CavityFree SF is to eliminate oral health disparities and
12 promote optimal oral health for all San Francisco children and youth by influencing policy,
13 affecting systems level changes, and improving access to prevention and care; and

14 WHEREAS, San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH) provides community-
15 based dental services and an annual citywide kindergarten dental assessment; and SFPDH
16 Primary Care Dental department provides education, case management, community
17 coordination, and advocacy for the most underserved and vulnerable residents in San
18 Francisco; and

19 WHEREAS, Three Children’s Oral Health Action Alliances (Chinatown, Mission, and
20 Bayview Hunters Point) engage with parents/caregivers and community partners to strategize
21 and promote the importance of oral health in a way that is most acceptable, appropriate, and
22 effective for the communities experiencing the greatest disease burden; and

23 WHEREAS, In 2026, the SF Children’s Oral Health Collaborative, now known as
24 CavityFree SF (founded in 2012), released the San Francisco Children’s Oral Health Strategic
25 Plan (2026-2030) which outlines five strategies to accomplish its mission:

- 1 ● Support and strengthen dental care access
- 2 ● Develop innovative pathways to access prevention and care
- 3 ● Advance advocacy and education on children's oral health
- 4 ● Foster a data-driven, community-oriented evaluation approach
- 5 ● Boost relationships and engagement within CavityFree SF; now therefore, be it

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7 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
8 recognizes the outreach efforts by CavityFree SF to communities bearing the greatest burden
9 of tooth decay; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco will continue to
11 support outreach, education and oral health programs for children, in addition to strengthening
12 prevention strategies; and, be it

13 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Health Commission pledges its commitment to
14 addressing oral health in SF; and, be it

15 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recognizes the month of
16 February 2026 as Children’s Dental Health Month in the City and County of San Francisco.

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