

# The Tribal Health Board's/Governing Body's Role in ECC Prevention

Early Childhood Caries (ECC) is any tooth decay in a child under 6 years of age. While some children may only have one tooth that is decayed, and some may have multiple teeth that are decayed (as shown in the picture to the right) it is important to understand that **tooth decay in childhood is not normal and can be prevented.**



Early childhood caries (tooth decay) is a devastating problem in young children. Not only can it cause pain and loss of teeth, but it also affects self-esteem, speech development, nutrition, and school attendance. Almost 80% of AI/AN children experience dental caries before they reach kindergarten.

The IHS has started a new initiative to draw attention to this problem, which afflicts more than half of Native American children. This project involves medical staff, dental staff, Community Health Representatives, WIC staff, Head Start staff, and other key stakeholders in your community concerned with the oral health of children. As a Tribal Council or Governing Board, **your support of this initiative is critical to its success in reducing tooth decay.**

## Things YOU can do

1. **Support** your health clinic in providing services to children inside the clinic and outside the clinic in the community at health fairs, schools, and special events.
2. **Learn** about Early Childhood Caries (tooth decay in young children) prevention and help spread the prevention messages throughout the community.
3. **Place a priority** on dental treatment of young children...the next generation.
4. **Draft a tribal resolution** to support the Early Childhood Caries Initiative (example on back page).



*Together, we can make a difference!*

# Sample Tribal Resolution

\_\_\_\_\_ TRIBAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION (#\_\_\_\_)

**WHEREAS**, the \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe/Nation is a Native American Indian Tribe organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, and

**WHEREAS**, the \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe is a sovereign Indian Nation, and recognized as such by the United States of America, and

**WHEREAS**, the \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal Council is the duly elected governing body of the \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe, as authorized by \_\_\_\_\_ of the Constitution and Bylaws adopted by the people of the \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe/Nation and approved by the Secretary of the Interior, and

**WHEREAS**, the Tribal Council, as the governing body of a sovereign nation, has the authority and responsibility of providing for the health, education, welfare and safety of the \_\_\_\_\_ People, and

**WHEREAS**, dental care has been identified as one of the most critical health problems facing the \_\_\_\_\_, and dental intervention has been determined to be a primary focus, and

**WHEREAS**, early childhood caries (ECC) is defined as tooth decay in children under 6 years of age, and is the most prevalent disease of childhood, and

**WHEREAS**, the 1999 IHS Oral Health Survey found that 76% of 2-5 year-olds had this disease, which can result in pain, infection, poor school performance, delayed speech and social development, poor self-esteem, and exorbitant costs to treat it, and

**WHEREAS**, the Indian Health Service has recently unveiled the IHS Early Childhood Caries Initiative to bring attention and priority to this problem through a multi-disciplinary approach focused on prevention and early intervention,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal Council hereby recognizes the importance of this Initiative and fully supports the implementation of the IHS Early Childhood Caries Initiative throughout the community.

## CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, as the Secretary-Treasurer of the \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal Council, certify that the Tribal Council is composed of \_\_\_ members of whom \_\_\_ were called and polled on this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, and that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members for, \_\_\_\_\_ members against, and \_\_\_\_\_ members abstaining; pursuant to the authority contained under \_\_\_\_\_ of our Tribal Constitution and Bylaws approved \_\_\_\_\_.

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairman

*Together, we can make a difference!*