

Pearly Whites ~ Make Them Sparkle



Sparkle, sparkle little teeth
Some above and some beneath.
Brush them all at every meal,
Clean and fresh they will always feel.
Sparkle, sparkle little teeth
Some above and some beneath

Sung to: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
~Original Author Unknown

Establish good oral health habits early. They can last a lifetime! Plan activities with young children that will promote caring for teeth. Provide families with toothbrushing tips to follow at home. Celebrate Dental Health Month in February and throughout the year!

Open Wide! Help infants identify their mouths. Sit with an infant facing a mirror. Point to the mouths in the mirror. "My mouth." "Your mouth." Show infants pictures of faces and people smiling. Point out those mouths. During meal-time, talk about the food going into the infant's mouth. Soon infants will begin to identify where their mouths are.






Toddlers and preschoolers can use small flashlights to inspect each other's teeth. Ask the children to describe their teeth – number, color, shape, and how their teeth line up. Mention the different kinds of teeth and the jobs they do. The sharp front teeth are for cutting. The pointy eyeteeth are for ripping and tearing. The square molars at the back smash and grind food.

Read *A Visit to the Dentist* by Eleanor Fremont. Ask children to describe their visits to the dentist. Arrange for a dentist or dental hygienist to come visit the children. Demonstrate brushing and flossing teeth. Discuss the benefits of oral hygiene. Use a puppet to role play a story of a child who refuses to brush her teeth. The puppet can ask the children why she should brush her teeth.

Develop a "dental" prop box for the dramatic play area. Include: toothbrushes, dental floss, small mirrors, plastic tools, mask, goggles and gloves, dental smock, and a tray. Ask a dentist for contributions. Children can practice going to the dentist. Display pictures of children at the dentist, human and animal teeth – and foods that strengthen teeth.

Establish toothbrushing in the classroom.



-  Start with labeled toothbrushes for each child, toothpaste, toothbrush storage unit and cover.
-  Set up a chart with the children's names on it. Let each child place a check (or sticker) by his/her name when they brush their teeth.
-  Use a large model of teeth and gums and a large toothbrush to demonstrate correct brushing techniques.



Show the children how to hold the brush at an angle against the base of the tooth and gum line. Show them how to wiggle in a circular motion and sweep to the end of the tooth. Wiggle the toothbrush – wiggle all over. Wiggle and Jiggle!

Fun Facts about Teeth

- Human teeth are made of the hardest substance in the body – enamel.
- The land animal with the most number of teeth is the armadillo – it has as many as 104!
- Sharks lose teeth throughout their life. They grow new ones to replace the lost teeth.
- In Libya when a child loses a baby tooth, she throws the tooth at the sun and says, "Bring me a new tooth." The child's father tells her that she has a bright smile because her teeth come from the sun.



Children's Books on Teeth

Brush! Brush! Brush!
by Alicia Pardon 2010



Snacks for Healthy Teeth
by Mari C. Schuh 2008



Take Care of Your Teeth
by Don L. Curry 2005



*Throw Your Tooth on the Roof:
Tooth Traditions from
Around the World*
by Selby Beeler 2001



Infant/Toddler



Preschool – School-age



Check These Out!

KidsHealth for Kids Caring for Those Pearly Whites!
Your Teeth
<http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/teeth.html>

Oral Health
Teacher Activities for the Early Childhood Classroom
www.scdhec.gov/administration/library/ML-025192.pdf