



## Helping Your Child Brush Their Teeth



Getting your child to brush his/her hair and teeth can be a challenge for a variety of reasons. These tasks can make your child feel powerless (because it can be scary to have something placed into your mouth), overwhelmed for sensory reasons, or frustrated because it is challenging due to difficulties with sequences or physical movement. Maintaining personal hygiene is vital and while teaching these skills may take time and patience, it is an important aspect of self-care. Your child will feel independent when he/she masters these skills and you will feel ease as your child's primary caregiver.

### Here are some tips to get you started:

1. Let your child pick out his/her own toothbrush. This might motivate them!
2. Use visuals to sequence the steps for hygiene routines.
3. Use simple language. Hygiene routines can be overwhelming for sensory reasons so it may help to reduce language demands.
4. Most dentist recommend brushing your teeth for 2 minutes. Allowing the child to have a timer or a song will likely increase their duration in the task.
5. Model the task for them. Some children learn best by having someone demonstrate the task. Allow the child to watch you brush your teeth and if possible, explain what you are doing.
6. Brushing teeth as a family can encourage participation in the task.
7. Having toys that imitate motions of brushing teeth assist in the child learning the motor actions behind the task.
8. Make it fun by singing songs and playing games. Daniel Tiger sings a song about tooth-brushing that tends to be popular.
9. Incorporate toothbrushing into play time! Practice brushing the teeth of your child's toys and dolls during play. This may help your child process his/her feelings, ask questions, and practice without fear!