

Dental Health Month Activities!

February 2017

Use these activities the day before and after your dental health visit, and all month long to extend learning!

Teeth Talk - Pass a mirror around the circle and have the children take a look at their teeth. Have them describe to you what they see. Chart their responses on chart paper. Possible questions: What color are teeth? What do we use them for? What else do we see in our mouth?

Large Group/Independent Center - Giant Teeth Brushing - Create a giant set of teeth out of cardboard or bulletin board paper and display in your classroom within reach of the children. Create a toothbrush out of cardboard sizeable to the set of teeth. Demonstrate the correct way to brush your teeth in small circular motions using the model and let children take turns practicing.

Toothbrush Painting - Wear smocks! Provide paint, newsprint, and toothbrushes for children to paint with.

Fine Motor and Literacy - Toothpaste play dough letter cards - Use the website [here](#) to print out play dough letter cards. Children will roll play dough, pretending it is toothpaste, and shape it like the letter on the card. (**PreS, PreK, SA**)

Literacy – Healthy Teeth Book - Create a class healthy teeth book or guide children in making individual books. Ask children to illustrate how they keep their teeth healthy and then dictate to you what their picture entails.

Sensory/Science – Homemade Toothpaste - Make toothpaste together as a class using 2/3 cup baking soda, 4tsp salt (optional), and 2 tsp. peppermint, spearmint, or orange extract. Add water to desired consistency. Talk about how the baking soda is the ingredient that scrubs and cleans the teeth. Let children touch this ingredient and explore its texture, making connections to its cleaning power.

Science – Tooth Experiment - **1.** Bring to circle time a hard-boiled egg, a jar, and a can of soda. Explain to the children that the shell of an egg is like the enamel on our teeth. It's white, hard, smooth, and it protects our teeth. Then, tell them that the egg will be placed in a jar of cola until tomorrow. Can they guess what might happen? Chart their answers and keep the chart for tomorrow. **2.** Bring the hard-boiled egg in the jar of cola along with another hard-boiled egg to the circle the next day. Ask children to describe what happened the day before and review their predictions on the chart paper. Introduce toothpaste and toothbrush and what they are used for. Take turns brushing the cola egg. (**PreS, PreK, SA**)

Fine Motor - Tooth lacing - Create tooth templates and punch holes around the edge (some closer together, some farther apart) for lacing. Provide yard and guide students in lacing teeth. (**PreS, PreK**)

Fine Motor - Smile Collage - Set out magazines and scissors. Ask children to cut smiles out of magazines and glue them to newsprint. (**Toddler teachers, assist children in finding and cutting out smiles. Encourage them to do the gluing!**)

Happy Tooth/Sad Tooth Art - Give each child a tooth shape. Have them draw a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other. Then, they can glue on magazine pictures or draw pictures of healthy food on the happy tooth and junk food on the sad tooth. Glue the tooth to a craft stick after to make a puppet.

Dramatic Play – dentist's checklist - Use the link [here](#) to print out dentists' checklists for children to use in the dental office dramatic play center. Add realistic props (toothbrushes, babies, animals as patients, magazines in the waiting area, and thematic books and photos.)

Spanish

Tongue – la lengua

Tooth – el diente

Mouth – la boca

Dentist – el dentista

Book Suggestions

Hooray for Teeth! by Gina Shaw

My Dentist by Harlow Rockwell

Tooth on the Loose by Linda Jennings

The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist by Stan and Jan Berenstain,

How Many Teeth? by Paul Showers

The Loose Tooth by Gina and Mercer Mayer

Dragon Teeth and Parrot Beaks by Almute Grohmann

Bear's Loose Tooth by Karma Wilson

Going to the Dentist by Anne Civardi

Teeth Are Not For Biting by Elizabeth Verdick (great for toddlers to listen to!)

*Ask a talkative toddler to create a story of their own while you write it down to create a class book.

Names of Teeth:

Premolars - Also called bicuspids, the four pairs of molars are located next to the cuspids. They crush and tear food.

Molars – There are twelve molars, in sets of three, at the back of the mouth. They have wide surfaces that help to grind food.

Incisors – There are eight incisors located in the front of the mouth (four on the top and four on the bottom). They have sharp, chisel-shaped crowns that cut food.

Cuspids – The four cuspids are next to each incisor. Cuspids have a pointed edge to tear food.

Dental Health Facts:

- Tooth decay (dental cavities) affects children in the United States more than any other chronic infectious diseases. Untreated tooth decay causes pain and infections that may lead to problems with things such as eating, speaking, playing, and learning.

- 'Baby' teeth are important because they hold the place for permanent teeth and help guide them into the correct position. 'Baby' teeth play an important role in the development of speech and chewing.

- A dental hygienist is a health care professional who teaches people how to keep their mouth, teeth, and gums healthy. They also can let you know if they see signs of other health problems.

My Tooth Fell Out

A tooth fell out, and left a space
So big my tongue could touch my face.

And every time I smile, I show
a space where something used to grow.

I miss my tooth as you can guess
But then, I have to brush one less!

