



CHILD BEHAVIOR  
AND  
THE DENTIST  
PARENT GUIDE

Success  
at Your Child's  
First Dental Visit





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very parent is nervous over how their child is going to behave at his/her first

dental visit. Our goal is for all our

new patients to have a FUN,

EXCITING, INTERESTING

and EDUCATIONAL visit. Dentistry

has changed over the past few

decades, but what hasn't changed is

our commitment to ensuring the most

positive experience for your child.

This is your child's first visit to our

office . . . we want it to be an

awesome one !!!

Here are a few helpful tips.



## BE POSITIVE

Don't let your child know of any anxiety YOU may have about dental visits. Don't bribe your child or threaten a dental visit as punishment.



## SET A GOOD EXAMPLE AT HOME

Children imitate their role models....YOU! Practice good dental habits at home. Brush and floss twice a day. Beware of frequent snacking. And visit your dentist on a regular basis. Talking to your children about how you go see your dentist often gets them excited about visiting "THEIR" dentist.



## MAKE THE FIRST VISIT AN ADVENTURE

If you're excited about your child's dental visit, (s)he will be excited too! Read the enclosed 'Welcome' page aloud to your child. Visit our website, [www.dentistryforchildren.com](http://www.dentistryforchildren.com), and check out the fun links to games and child friendly sites. Read books with your child that describe a first dental visit (Sesame Street, Arthur). Come to our office early on the day of your child's appointment and enjoy our fun waiting area filled with games, toys, a large fish tank and even PlayStation2™.



## DON'T OVEREXPLAIN

Children often ask what is going to happen at the dental appointment. Don't purposely mislead your child. At the same time, don't give your child more information than (s)he is able to understand. By all means avoid using words like 'hurt', 'drill', 'x-rays' or 'shot'. You will find that we use only child friendly words in describing the various instruments and procedures your child will experience in our office. Avoid comments that may appear to be reassuring like 'Don't worry, the doctor won't hurt you.' Such comments actually make your child more anxious rather than less. After all, your child knows that when anticipated experiences are really fun, you never say that.



## BE PREPARED TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO GO INTO THE TREATMENT AREA ALONE

We have deliberately set aside sufficient time for your child to experience a well planned, pleasant introductory dental visit. We understand that you may wish to accompany your child and share his/her first dental experience. In most cases, we invite you to come in toward the end of your child's visit to do so. At that time we will also discuss with you what we have found. Sometimes, it can be difficult to gain a child's attention when (s)he is distracted by parents and siblings. We try to keep our focus at all times on your child, and parental presence can occasionally undermine the communication and rapport that we are trying to establish with your child

If your child shows anxiety about coming to the treatment area without you, however, you may certainly accompany him/her. Some children – particularly the very youngest – are often more comfortable with a parent nearby. We may, however, ask you to be a 'silent partner' and stand by quietly in order to give our hygienist an opportunity to establish communication and trust directly with your child.



## COPING BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN

A first dental visit can be a challenging new experience for a young child. Children frequently fear the unknown, and sometimes exhibit “avoidance behavior” in the form of squirming or crying. Parents should not be surprised or embarrassed if their child does not initially cooperate in the dental office. If allowed the opportunity, children usually take great pride in overcoming their fears, and most of our patients who might have cried initially leave with a big smile on their faces.



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