

TOOTHBRUSHING



- Essential to daily living and a healthy lifestyle
- Highly involved with motor planning, visual/fine motor skills, and sensory processing
- Students struggling in these area can find tooth brushing to be an aversive experience

USING VISUALS AS SUPPORTS

brush teeth



toothbrush



toothpaste



put toothpaste on brush



brush teeth



rinse mouth



USING VISUALS AS SUPPORTS



SUPPORTING MOTOR DIFFICULTIES

- ✘ Toothpaste: removing cap can be difficult. Consider a push/stand up toothpaste to create independence. If independence with applying tooth paste is not a goal, have it set up for the child. Rolling up the toothpaste and/or applying a clip to the end can help toothpaste come out easier.
- ✘ Holding the toothbrush: The thicker the circumference of the handle, the easier it is to hold. Consider this when buying a toothbrush, or build up the handle with cylindrical foam grip. Non-slip material such as dycem around the handle may also help.
- ✘ Brushing teeth: Instead of doing hand over hand, try supporting at the elbow and using verbal and visual cues (picture of mouth) to assist student in gaining independence.

SUPPORTING SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES

- ✘ Children with sensory processing difficulties may have difficulty with tactile input within or around their mouth; light touch may be a noxious stimuli.
- ✘ These children may benefit from a softer (baby) bristle brush (less input) or a vibrating tooth brush (more input).
- ✘ Prior to tooth brushing, try providing tactile input on child's face with rag or different texture sponges.

EASY STUFF!

- ✘ Let your child pick out their own toothbrush and/or toothpaste
- ✘ Sing songs
- ✘ Kids love to imitate-brush your teeth at the same time
- ✘ Let them do it first, (even if they are just sucking or chewing on it), then brush.
- ✘ Use a timer-lots of I-Phone/I-Pad apps to assist

CLOSING POINTS

- ✘ If they won't brush, make sure they drink plenty of water.
- ✘ Spitting is tough! Practice first with water. Drink, swish, repeat.
- ✘ Children with G-tubes tend to have greater plaque build up because they produce less saliva. Try to have them chew on something to help create saliva production.