

# Happy Smiles: Visiting the Dentist!

## Introduction: Our Amazing Teeth! (5-7 minutes)

- Start with a fun, simple song about teeth or brushing. (Example: Sing to the tune of 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat': 'Brush, brush, brush your teeth, Brush them every day! Up and down and all around, To keep the germs away!')
- Ask your little one: "Can you show me your teeth? Wow! What do we use our teeth for?" (Guide answers like eating, smiling, talking).
- "Who helps us keep our teeth super clean and healthy?" (The dentist!) "Today, we're going to learn about friendly dentists and how to take care of our amazing teeth!"

## Activity 1: Meet the Mouth! (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce the large toy teeth model or your playdough mouth creation. If using playdough, have pink/red for gums and white for teeth.
- "Look at all these teeth! Let's count some." (Count a few together).
- Talk about the parts: "These are the teeth, and this pink part is the gums that hold our teeth nice and snug."
- If using playdough, let your child help make some white "teeth" and place them in a pink "gum" base.
- Explain gently: "Sometimes, little 'sugar bugs' (you can use a tiny piece of brown/black playdough to represent this if you wish) try to make tiny homes in our teeth if we eat too many sweets and forget to brush. The dentist is like a superhero who helps us make sure these sugar bugs stay away!"

## Activity 2: Play Dentist! (10-15 minutes)

- Read a simple, friendly picture book about a child's visit to the dentist. Focus on the positive aspects.
- Set up a "dentist's office." Your child can be the dentist, and a doll, stuffed animal, or the teeth model can be the patient (or you can be the patient!).
- Provide the child-sized toothbrush. "Dr. [Child's Name], can you show me how to brush the patient's teeth to make them sparkly clean?"
- Guide them to brush up, down, and all around on the model or toy. "Great job brushing away any pesky sugar bugs!"
- Talk about what the dentist does in simple, non-scary terms: "The dentist counts our teeth and looks at them with a little mirror to make sure they are healthy and strong. They help us keep our smiles bright!"
- Optional: Use dentist dress-up items for more immersive play.

## Activity 3: Healthy Smile Collage (10-15 minutes)

- Give your child a piece of construction paper (perhaps a large red or pink paper cut into a mouth shape, or just a regular sheet).
- Provide pre-cut white paper shapes (ovals, squares work well) or white playdough for teeth.
- "Let's make a happy, healthy smile! You can glue your white 'teeth' onto the paper to make a big smile."
- Offer crayons or washable markers. "What else does a happy mouth have? Maybe a tongue? Or a big smile shape around the teeth? You can draw what makes your smile special!"
- As they work, talk about how brushing and visiting the dentist helps us have happy smiles like the one they are creating.

## Activity 4: Yummy Foods for Strong Teeth (Optional - 5-7 minutes)

- If you have them, show pictures or real examples of healthy foods (apple slices, carrots, cheese) and some less healthy treats (candy, cookies).
- "Let's see... which of these foods help our teeth stay strong and healthy for smiling and chewing?" (Guide them to choose the healthier options).
- "These foods like apples and carrots are yummy and good for our teeth! Sweet treats are okay sometimes, but we need to remember to brush extra well afterward to send those sugar bugs packing!"

### **Wrap-up: Sparkly Clean! (5 minutes)**

- Admire their "Healthy Smile Collage." "Wow, what a beautiful healthy smile you made! It looks so strong and happy."
- Review in a playful way: "So, who helps us keep our teeth shiny?" (The dentist!). "And what do WE do every day to keep our teeth super happy?" (Brush them!).
- Sing the tooth brushing song again, perhaps while everyone pretends to brush their own teeth.
- Give lots of praise for their wonderful participation and for being a great "dental expert" today!