

Say Cheese!

A Lesson on Dental Care

Playgroup #9

Materials Needed

- A blank sheet of paper for each member of your playgroup.
- A pen or pencil for each member of your playgroup.
- A long piece of white yarn.
- Pieces of assorted colors of felt.

Handouts

- Dental Benefits Guide
- Brush Up on Healthy Teeth

Introduction

Give each mom a blank sheet of paper and tell them that they are going to have a “pop quiz.” Ask them to answer the following questions:

1. When should you take your child for their first dental check-up?
2. When should you start your child’s oral care?
3. When should you start using toothpaste?
4. When should you start flossing your child’s teeth?
5. When does your child have the motor dexterity to brush his/her own teeth?

Answers: 1. By his first birthday, 2. Just before his first teeth erupt through his gums, 3. When you child is able to spit, 4. When his molars start to come in or if two adjacent teeth are touching, 5. Between the ages of 6 and 8.

Go over the answers with the mothers in your playgroup. Explain to them that good oral care is important, even at a young age.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Understand the difference between primary teeth and permanent teeth
- Know how to care for your child’s teeth and gums
- Know when to take your child to the dentist
- Know the options for those without dental insurance

Your Child’s Mouth

Primary Teeth

Infants are born with almost all their primary teeth developed, however they are still hidden under the gums. Your child’s teeth will typically begin to erupt through the gums around 6 months. The first teeth to erupt are usually the two bottom front teeth, followed by the four top

front teeth. Teeth will continue to erupt, usually two at a time on either side of the jaw. By the time your child is 36 months old, he should have 20 primary teeth (Colgate, 2005).

Primary teeth are smaller than permanent teeth and will usually have more space between them. The spaces help to make sure that there will be enough space in the mouth for their permanent teeth. The spaces also make it easier to clean in between your child's teeth (Colgate, 2005).

The purposes of primary teeth are to:

- Help your child chew and bite food
- Help your child speak correctly
- Make your child look more attractive
- Save space for your child's permanent teeth
- Guide your child's permanent teeth into place

Permanent Teeth

Your child will begin losing his baby teeth around the age of 6 or 7. The tooth will then be replaced with a permanent tooth. Your child's 20 primary teeth will be replaced by 32 permanent teeth. The first permanent teeth to emerge are usually the lower central incisors or the first molars in some children. Most of your child's permanent teeth will be in place by the age of 13. Wisdom teeth usually come in between the ages of 17 and 21 (Colgate, 2005).

The Dos and Don'ts of Child Oral Care

- Do put your child to bed with a bottle of water if you put him to bed with a bottle.
- Do **not** put your child to bed with a bottle of milk, juice, or Kool-Aid.
- Do use a warm, wet gauze or washcloth to cleanse your baby's gums just before he/she starts teething. Continue to cleanse this way after his/her front teeth come in.
- Do use a warm, wet toothbrush on your child's teeth once he/she has four teeth in a row on the top or bottom.
- Do use a small (very small) amount of toothpaste once your child is able to spit.
Remember, it is the brushing that works more than the toothpaste.
- Do brush your child's teeth for him twice a day until he has the motor dexterity to do it on his own (around the age of 7). He may want to brush his teeth on his own. Give him a turn at brushing his own teeth but be sure to do it yourself also. You are ultimately responsible for keeping your child's teeth clean each day.
- Do floss your child's teeth everyday once his permanent teeth come in. Around the age of 2-3 you should begin flossing his teeth 3 times per week. Remember, if you want your child to keep his teeth then you need to floss them.
- Do avoid sticky, sugary, and acidic foods. If your child does eat these foods, make sure to brush and floss his teeth soon afterward to avoid plaque buildup and decay.
- Do take your child to the dentist around his first birthday. Continue to get check-ups every 6 months.
- Do look for a dentist that is a pediatric specialist. They have two years of extra training in pediatric dental care.

Options for the Uninsured

- CHIP – Children’s Health Insurance Plan
 - For more information about CHIP dental benefits and dentists, call Public Employees Dental Program (PEDP) at 801-366-7555 or toll-free 1-800-765-7347.
- Medicaid
 - Apply at your local Workforce Services. For more details, call Medicaid information at (801) 538-6155 or (800) 662-9651.
- “Give Kids a Smile” month
 - Every month of February participating dentists offer free exams and discounted prices. Call the Utah Dental Association for a list of participating dentists.
- Mountainlands Community Health Center
 - To get on the list for dental services you must pre-qualify by calling the Dental Receptionist at (801) 429-2012.
- Community Health Connect
 - Those in need to dental care can be connected with dentists in the community that will provide services at a discounted price or on a charity basis. To apply you can fill out the form online at www.communityhealthconnect.org or go to the office at 250 West Center Street Suite 111 in Provo. For questions call (801) 818-3014.

Activity

Your teeth have five surfaces – the front, back, top, and along the two sides in between your teeth. Your toothbrush easily reaches three of the five surfaces, but we often forget to clean between our teeth. This is why it is important to floss.

Have four mothers volunteer to demonstrate why it is important to floss. Have two of the moms (or children if old enough) stand side by side, shoulders touching. These are the teeth. Place pieces of colored felt between the “teeth.” This represents the food that gets stuck in between our teeth (e.g. green felt might represent a piece of lettuce). Now have the other two moms each grab the end of a long piece of white yarn (the floss). They will then continue to floss in between the “teeth,” removing the stuck “food” from between the teeth. Explain to them that this is what happens every time we floss our teeth.

Suggested Reading

Clarabella’s Teeth

By An Vrombaut

References

Colgate (2005). *Your child’s mouth*. Retrieved on November 19, 2007, from <http://www.colgate.com/app/Colgate/US/OC/Information/OralHealthAtAnyAge/InfantsAndChildren/ToddlersChildren/YourChildsMouth.cvsp>