

## Toothbrushing 101

Best case scenario, complete and proper tooth brushing techniques for two minutes, twice daily.

However, we understand that there are steps to reaching that goal. If your child struggles with toothbrushing, consider these alternatives as building blocks to proper brushing technique.

It's important for ALL kids to see the dentist twice a year. Many specialize in pediatric dentistry and with children with all kinds of needs. Compiled list of area pediatric dentists. (see website)  
Social story about going to the dentist (see website)

### Environment:

- Work on skill in your bathroom

- Keep people at a minimum in the bathroom to decrease distractions when practicing

- Try using visuals to refer student to (see website)

- Make toothbrushing a consistent routine.

- Model good toothbrushing behaviors

Sensory Alternatives and building blocks to proper tooth brushing for the aversive, or easily overstimulated child.

- Extreme aversion: start routine outside of the mouth, then front of teeth, then sides of mouth and finally tongue.

  - Use a damp washcloth to massage mouth, teeth, gums

  - Consider the temperature of the water.

  - Monitor use of pressure on teeth and gums (grading pressure)

  - Use of a NUK brush (where to find in the store)

  - Consider electric toothbrushes

  - Option to use their finger

  - Consider changing up the taste of toothpaste

  - Consider brushing with mouthwash instead of just water (short term solution)

  - Practice spitting out toothpaste...first with water (if student is struggling spitting out toothpaste, talk with dentist about options for fluoride)

  - Use a cup

  - Gagging- it will happen, but with consistent practice, and use of alternative strategies, this will improve. Remember to approach from the side of the mouth instead of the middle to decrease triggering the gag reflex