

# WHY SHOULD WE PREPARE CHILDREN FOR DENTAL TREATMENT?

Children and young people cope better emotionally with medical and dental treatment if they know what to expect. Therefore, Children's Health Scotland recommends that parents/carers and healthcare professionals should help children understand and prepare for dental procedures and treatments by using child-friendly language, play, toys, books, and other resources, keeping in mind the child's age and level of understanding.



## CHILDREN'S HEALTH SCOTLAND

We are the only charity in Scotland dedicated to informing, promoting, and campaigning on behalf of the healthcare needs and rights of all children and young people. We provide a range of services, expertise, information, and leaflets focused on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and their families. As a well-established charity we are very proud of the services we provide. However, we never forget that our achievements are only possible thanks to the generosity of trusts, supporters, and volunteers. This help is always necessary to help fund our work, so that every child and young person can exercise their right to the best possible health. If you would like to help fund our work, then please go online and make a donation at [www.childrenshealthscotland.org](http://www.childrenshealthscotland.org). If you would like to get involved with our fundraising efforts please email [fundraising@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:fundraising@childrenshealthscotland.org).

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more specific information about the treatment your child will be having, ask your dentist, dental nurse, or visit one of these websites:

- <http://www.dentalhealth.org.uk>
- <http://www.scottishdental.org>
- <http://www.child-smile.org>

For more specific information about dental care, please visit our website at [www.childrenshealthscotland.org](http://www.childrenshealthscotland.org), or give us a call on **0131 553 6553**.



☎ 0131 553 6553

🌐 [www.childrenshealthscotland.org](http://www.childrenshealthscotland.org)

✉ [enquiries@childrenshealthscotland.org](mailto:enquiries@childrenshealthscotland.org)



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# DENTAL CARE

## #myhealthmyrights

Every child has the right to the best possible health. This leaflet is focused on helping you and your child prepare for dental treatment. Remember, we are here to help.



## WHAT CAN PARENTS/ CARERS DO?



Tell your child what to expect. If your child needs dental treatment, ask what will be involved and share this information in a way your child will understand.

Planning a special treat after the treatment will give them something to look forward to, such as a visit to a play park, or watching a favourite film. It is better if, the treat is not related to sugary foods like sweets or chocolate so that you can teach your child about good dental care.



Ask to visit the dentist's surgery or the hospital before the treatment and allow your child to ask questions; they might have developed a fear from stories or television programmes that can be sorted out before they come for treatment.



Be truthful if the treatment might hurt. You will risk losing your child's trust if they are surprised or distressed. There are several good children's books available about visiting the dentist or going to the hospital. Your child's school, playgroup, nursery, or your local library can help you find or borrow these. The Children's Health Scotland website has a useful list of suitable books.



Help your child learn to take good care of their mouth and teeth. Try not to use a visit to the dentist or the fact that your child needs to have teeth extracted as a punishment for not taking care of their teeth. This might give a child a reason to fear the dentist. 'Blaming' your child for needing dental treatment will shame them - not encourage them to take good care of their teeth.



Be positive. Try not to promote anxiety in children by 'passing on' previous experiences with dental care. Dentistry and our understanding of how to care for our teeth have changed for the better. Take your baby with you to visit the dentist before they show their first tooth. This will help a child get used to visiting the dentist's surgery, opening their mouth and developing trust as a normal part of their overall health.



The health and wellbeing of children and young people lie at the heart of our work. Our services focus on improving the confidence, self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, whilst promoting a greater understanding of health rights and improved access to services at times of illness. We offer a range of health and wellbeing expertise and services focused on the following five key areas:



### EXPERTISE AND INFORMATION

We provide children, young people, and families with health-related expertise and information to enable equitable access to the best quality health services. Please contact us for health and wellbeing resources and activities or ask us for support, guidance or information by telephone, email, or face to face.



### VOICE

We are the national voice for children and young people, promoting the universal recognition of the healthcare needs and rights of all children and young people and their families.



### TRAINING AND RESOURCES

We provide a range of training, information sessions, and resources to ensure that children, young people, and their families are empowered to identify their needs and rights during illness and access appropriate services.

### HEALTH-RELATED DENTAL PLAY

Letting children play dentist can be a good way to explain treatments to them and to make them feel more in control. Children's Health Scotland offers dental play sessions to help your child feel more comfortable with dental treatment. We also have a supplemental leaflet on ideas for how to play well with your child.

If your child already has a fear of the dentist, you can help them overcome this fear by using play. Children's Health Scotland has trained Healthcare Play Specialists who you can contact for advice on this.



### IMPROVING LIFE EXPERIENCES

We deliver national services across Scotland focused on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. This includes a variety of health and wellbeing programmes (both face-to-face and online) and 1:1 sessions in primary and secondary schools. We work directly with children and young people, parents, carers, and professionals to ensure the best possible healthcare is received for children and young people to improve their life experiences.



### HEALTH-RELATED PLAY

We offer both in person and online health-related play sessions and workshops. More than just a chance to have fun, play is serious business when it comes to children's health and health-related play can help children physically, mentally, and emotionally.

