

# Dear Parents,

**You are your child's oral health hero!** Children follow their parent's example in learning how to take care of their teeth. If you display good habits, they will too. Ask your child what they have been learning about oral health at school. Then continue the conversation at home with these important tips created in collaboration with the **Guardian Life Insurance Company of America®** and **Children's Health Fund**.

Remember, oral health is not just about avoiding toothaches and cavities—studies show that untreated tooth decay can also cause missed school days, poor academic performance, and low self-esteem. It is easy to get your little one excited about brushing and flossing. When you make oral care a fun family project, you'll give everyone a reason to smile.

Let's see  
your  
biggest  
smile!



## Tips to Protect Your Child's Smile



### Let them choose a brush.

If a toothbrush with a character or fun color gets your child excited about brushing, that's a win. Just make sure the brush isn't too hard or too large.

**Use toothpaste with fluoride.** If your child is 5 or 6 years old, they only need a pea-sized amount, says the American Dental Association, since young children tend to swallow

the paste instead of spitting it out. You can use a larger smear for older brushers.

**Brush twice a day for two minutes.** To keep it fun, play a two-minute song, set a timer, or tell them a special brush-time story. (The two-minute rule applies to adults too, so check your habits!)

**Floss once a day.** A toothbrush can reach only

about 40 percent of tooth surfaces. To clean the areas where teeth touch, you need to floss your child's teeth.

**Lend a hand.** Your child won't have the motor skills to brush without your help until age 7 or 8. Even then, you should supervise to make sure they're thorough.

**Schedule a dental exam.** Your child needs a check-up every six months. Set a calendar reminder so you don't forget!

**Buy healthy snacks.** Fill your kitchen with nutritious treats that don't promote tooth decay, such as apples, carrots, cheese, and yogurt. And serve water, not soda or other sugary drinks.