

# Healthy Little Smiles at Storytime

## Talk about toothbrushing



Read a Book



Puppet Play



Create and Learn



Sing a Song



Share with Families

Storytime is a powerful way to support children’s learning and development, nurturing a love of reading, words, and language.

Through the wonderful world of books and stories, we can also help children learn about and develop healthy habits that keep their smiles strong and healthy.

Stories, songs, and puppets makes brushing teeth fun – giving children a healthy start and goes a long way to keeping them happy and healthy for life.

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1

# Read a Book

Read a dental or tooth-related book – see our suggestions:



**Ginger McFlea will not Clean her Teeth**  
**Lee Fox**

Age: 3-5 years

**Tooth Monsters**  
**Jessica Martinello**

Age: 3-6 years

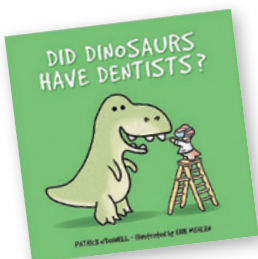
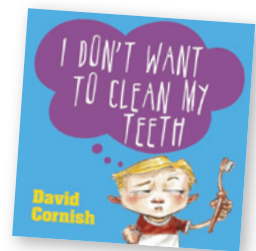


**Vlad's Bad Breath**  
**Rory H. Mather and Jesus Lopez**

Age: 3-8 years

**I Don't Want to Clean My Teeth**  
**David Cornish**

Age: 3-8 years



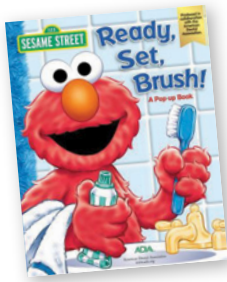
**Did Dinosaurs have Dentists?**  
**Patrick O'Donnell**

Age: 8-12 years

**Brush Your Teeth, Max and Millie\***  
**Felicity Brooks**

Age: 2-4 years



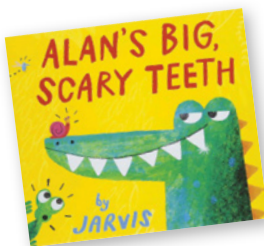


**Ready, Set, Brush!  
(Sesame Street)**  
**Matt Mitter**

Age: 2-5 years

**When a Dragon  
Comes to Stay**  
**Caryl Hart**

Age: 2-5 years

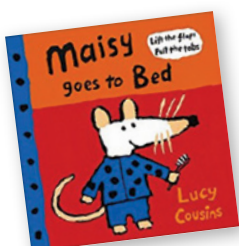
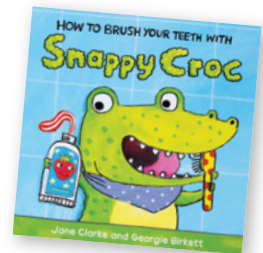


**Alan's Big Scary  
Teeth**  
**Jarvis**

Age: 3-5 years

**How to Brush  
Your Teeth with  
Snappy Croc\***  
**Jane Clarke and  
illustrated by  
Georgie Birkett**

Age: baby-1 year



**Maisy Goes to Bed**  
**Lucy Cousins**

Age: 3-5 years

**The Going to Bed  
Book**  
**Sandra Boynton**

Age: Baby-5 years



**\*Some books mention rinsing your mouth with water after brushing. Australian guidelines recommend after brushing, spit the toothpaste out but don't rinse with water. This allows a layer of fluoride toothpaste to sit on the teeth for longer, increasing protection.**

We've selected stories with the aim of fostering a positive attitude about teeth and how we take care of them (ie brushing teeth and visiting the dentist). We've tried to avoid books that refer to pain with tooth decay (or cavities), fillings or having teeth removed (as well as books that associate visiting the dentist with toothache, fixing teeth, or as scary), which might convey fear and anxiety.

Overall, we want to foster a positive message, like encouraging children to take increasing responsibility in basic health routines, and encourage behaviours such as brushing teeth every day and visiting the dentist for a regular check-up.





**Brush Chomper's teeth**

**2**

**Puppet Play**

Let's make brushing teeth fun!

Help children become familiar with and develop a positive attitude to brushing teeth, and learn child-friendly cues to take an active role in brushing.

Download **Let's brush!** A4 poster for each family  
[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)



## Materials



- ★ Chomper toothbrushing puppet
- ★ Oversized toothbrush

## Preparation

- Watch Tash and Chomper explain the 4 steps of toothbrushing here: [youtu.be/TWA6UWUwkh8](https://youtu.be/TWA6UWUwkh8)
- Visit YouTube channel @VicDental and watch **Let's brush! With Tash and Chomper**
- A copy of **Let's brush!** A4 Poster for each family

## Talking points

- ★ **Brushing your teeth helps keep them clean and healthy.**
- ★ **We brush our teeth every morning and every night before bed.**
- ★ **“What are we doing when we brush our teeth?” Brushing the germs and very small pieces of food off our teeth.**
- ★ **“I wonder what would happen if we didn't brush our teeth?”**

## Method

**Use the books to talk about brushing teeth.**

**Demonstrate how to brush with Chomper the puppet (follow along with the Let's brush! handout - it's a helpful cheat sheet!)**

To brush my teeth I need a soft toothbrush and low-fluoride toothpaste.

Fluoride toothpaste makes your teeth strong and clean – and you only need a little bit, about the size of a pea.

1. We start by brushing the **outside** of your teeth.  
*Make a big smile like a monkey.*  
We brush all our teeth and gums by moving the brush in **circles**.  
Circles on the top and circles on the bottom.
2. Next we brush the **insides** of your teeth.  
*Open wide and roar like a lion.*  
We brush all our teeth by moving the brush in circles.  
Circles on the top and circles on the bottom.
3. Then we brush the **back** teeth – that's where the food gets stuck and germs hide.  
*Remember to keep roaring like a lion!*  
We brush our back teeth by moving the toothbrush back-and-forth.  
Back-and-forth on the top and **back-and-forth** on the bottom.
4. And to finish, we **spit out** the toothpaste bubbles.  
*We don't swallow and we don't rinse with water.*







## Talking about toothbrushing at Storytime

### Talking points for families

Today we're going to talk about brushing teeth.

Let's make brushing fun – for kids and families! We'll play together, read a story and sing a song. We'll brush 'Chompers' teeth together using simple child-friendly cues and actions that help children take part in brushing their teeth.

Our teeth do important jobs – we use our teeth to talk, eat and smile! So, we brush our teeth twice a day to keep them healthy (and prevent decay).

As children grow and want to be more independent, we can help them develop self-care skills, like brushing teeth – just like we help them learn other everyday health practices, such as washing their hands and covering their coughs.



## Talking points for children

Teeth can get sick. It's important we look after our teeth.

We brush our teeth (with fluoride toothpaste) to keep them clean, strong and healthy.

A grown-up helps you brush the tricky bits.

Cues for brushing: We brush in circles and back-and-forth. We brush inside and outside, top and bottom.

Brushing our teeth is something we do every day. We brush our teeth every morning and every night before bed. It is part of our bedtime routine – and morning routine.

We spit out the toothpaste bubbles after we finish brushing (we don't rinse with water).

## Resources

These resources include all the information you need to talk to children and families about toothbrushing.



**How to brush your child's teeth!** A4 handout

[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)



**Let's brush!** decal (with child-friendly instructions)

[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)

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# Sing a Song



## This is the Way We Brush Our Teeth

(Sing to the tune of "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush")

This is the way I brush my teeth  
Brush my teeth, brush my teeth  
This is the way I brush my teeth  
So early in the morning.

This is the way my toothbrush goes  
Round and round, round and round  
This is the way my toothbrush goes  
So early in the morning.

Substitute your own words for additional verses:

"This is the way I brush in the back, brush in the back."

"This is the way I brush over my tongue, over my tongue."

## Brush, Brush, Brush Your Teeth

(Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Brush, brush, brush your teeth  
Gently round your gums.  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  
Brushing is such fun!!  
Brush, brush, brush your teeth  
Brush them every day.  
The front, the sides, the back, the top  
To keep decay (or the bugs or germs) away!

## Brushing Song

(Sing to the tune of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star")

Got my toothpaste, got my brush  
I won't hurry, I won't rush.  
Making sure my teeth are clean  
Front and back and in between.  
When I brush for quite a while  
I will have a happy smile!





## Resources

You can find all the Healthy Little Smiles Storytime resources here:

[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)



**Let's sing + brush**  
more song ideas

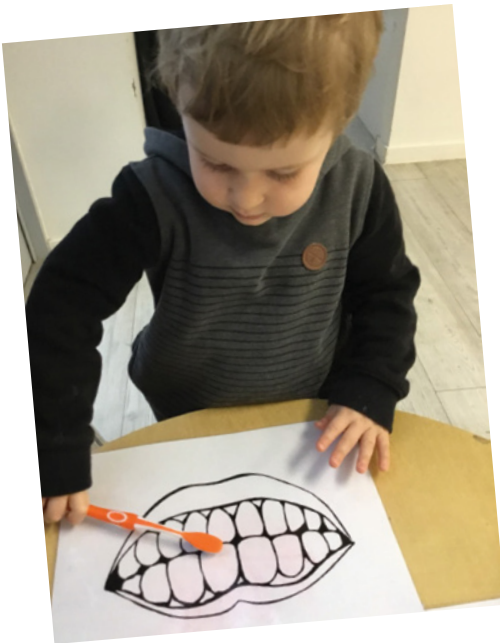
[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)



## 4

## Craft and Learn

## Brush off monsters



In this hands-on activity we encourage children's curiosity and exploration about why we brush our teeth, as well as rehearsing cues for brushing and practicing fine motor skills (circles, back-and-forth, top and bottom).

## Talking points

- ★ **“What are we doing when we brush our teeth?”** Brushing the germs and very small pieces of food off our teeth.
- ★ **Brushing your teeth with toothpaste makes your teeth strong and healthy – and you only need a little bit. Spit out the toothpaste after you finish brushing.**

## Materials

- ★ **Picture of teeth** Laminated
- ★ Whiteboard markers
- ★ Toothbrushes

## Preparation



Download **Picture of teeth** template for each child  
[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)

## Method

1. Print picture of teeth and laminate (or slide into plastic envelope)
2. Draw funny-looking germ (bacteria) monsters on it with whiteboard markers
3. Children brush off germ-monsters with a toothbrush



# Make your own bedtime routine chart



Setting up a routine at bedtime (and mornings) helps children understand and get ready for daily activities. Including toothbrushing in the bedtime routine helps children understand brushing is a part of daily life.

Creating a bedtime routine chart together provides an opportunity for families to talk about the steps to get ready for bed, and helps children feel involved and familiar with their bedtime routine.

## Materials

- ★ **This is How I Get Ready for Bed** template or plain paper to draw your own
- ★ **This is How I Get Ready for Bed** sticker sheet
- ★ Textas, crayons, pencils for drawing
- ★ Collage materials, cut-out pictures
- ★ Scissors
- ★ Glue and/or sticky-tape

## Method

1. Let's make a bedtime routine chart. Our bedtime routine chart will help us remember the things you do every night as you get ready for bed.
2. Creating the visual chart together and explaining the night-time routine helps a child understand and follow the steps to get ready for bed.
3. Make a bedtime routine chart and talk about how routines help children know what to expect and when to expect it. Making toothbrushing part of the bedtime routine helps children understand brushing is a part of daily life.

## Preparation



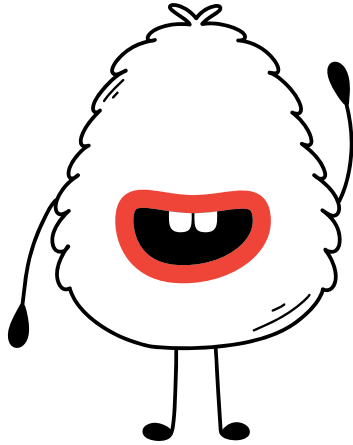
Download **This is How I Get Ready for Bed** template and sticker sheet for each child  
[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)



## Talking points

- ★ **“Do you have a special bedtime routine? What are the things you do every night that help you get ready for bed and have a good night’s sleep? How do you get ready for bed and a good night’s sleep?”**
- ★ **Who (and what – teddy bear, etc) do you say “goodnight” to every night?**

# Create-a-Monster



Use these monsters to bring attention to teeth and start a conversation about the important jobs our teeth do (and why we need to take care of them).

## Method

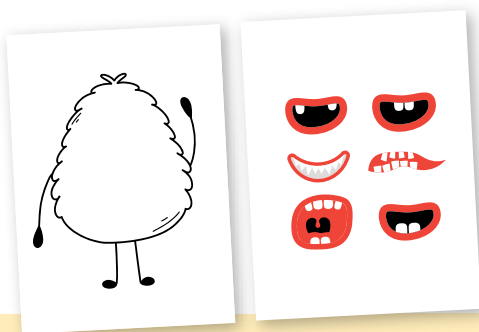
Make a fun monster!

1. Print out the monster templates:
  - Print monster outline and monster eyes, mouth and teeth – children can cut out and glue together.
  - Or print them black and white/gray-scale and children can color them in.
  - Or just print just the monster outline and children can draw in the eyes and mouth.
2. Choose the shape of your monster (or draw your own). Add more details to make your monster come alive.

## Materials

- ★ **Create-a-Monster** template
- ★ **Pick a monster mouth** template
- ★ Textas for colouring-in
- ★ Scissors
- ★ Glue and/or sticky-tape

## Preparation



Download **Create-a-Monster** and **Pick a monster mouth** templates

[www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)

## Talking points

- ★ **These monsters have lost their teeth! Let's give them some teeth.**
- ★ **Why does a monster need teeth? To eat, talk and smile.**
- ★ **Why do we need teeth? Teeth are an important part of our body. We use our teeth to smile, talk and eat.**
- ★ **You will have 20 teeth by the time you are 3 or 4 years old. How many teeth does the monster have?**

## Self-portraits / Silly Smile mask



As children get to know their bodies and how they work, it's a great time to help children learn how to care for them, and how to be healthy.

Encourage young children to explore and investigate parts of their body – their head and talk about what these body parts do (our senses).

### Method

Ask children to draw their face (or silly smile). Let children decorate the face by painting, drawing or other materials on this, to add features such as eyes, nose and mouth.

### Materials

- ★ Paper plates (cut in half for Silly Smiles)
- ★ Scissors
- ★ Glue and/or sticky-tape
- ★ Textas, crayons, pencils for drawing
- ★ Icy pole sticks or wooden stir sticks (for Silly Smiles)
- ★ Collage materials – paper, wool, etc

### Talking points

- ★ **What do you do with your teeth? (nose, eyes, ears)**
- ★ **“What can you see when you smile? What makes you smile?”  
Our teeth help us smile.**
- ★ **Teeth have three important jobs – smiling, talking and eating**
- ★ **Teeth are an important part of our body. There are lots of things we can do to look after our teeth**

### Preparation

A blank paper plate (or half) – for each child

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# Share with Families

 You can find all the Healthy Little Smiles Storytime resources here: [www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)



**Let's brush!** – A4 poster

Families can stick this poster on the bathroom mirror and read the steps together - the animals explain the steps in brushing.

Families can access singalong toothbrushing songs and videos on their phone using the QR code.

Translated versions available: [www.dhsv.link/Storytime](http://www.dhsv.link/Storytime)

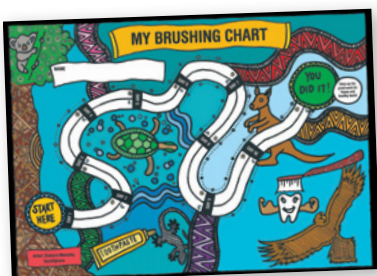
**It's fun to brush** – A4 toothbrushing chart

Brushing charts are great because they help make brushing a fun and positive experience for kids - and act as a handy reminder for parents to say "well done" for brushing!



**My Brushing Chart** – A4

This toothbrush chart was designed by Aboriginal Artist, Shakara Montalto. Kids are encouraged to brush their teeth morning and night and this is represented in the form of a sun and moon.







**Keeping teeth healthy – A4 handout**

We simplified Australia’s dental health guidelines into simple, bite-sized chunks that are easy to remember and to share with families.

Translated versions available at Health Translations, Victorian Government of Australia:

[www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/)

**Deadly Tooth Tips – A4 trifold**

The Deadly Tooth Tips artwork, designed by Aboriginal artist, Madison Connors, features animal child-friendly ambassadors to represent key dental health themes. The names of the animal ambassadors honour the language of the Yorta Yorta people: Wala (water), Dhuna (eat) and Dirran (teeth).



**Toothbrushing songs + videos – A4 handout**

Do you sing and brush, or brush and sing?! Share this list of toothbrushing songs and videos with families to help make brushing teeth a fun activity that kids enjoy.

**How to brush your child’s teeth – A4 handout**

An information sheet with simple and clear information on how to brush a baby’s teeth (up to 18 months), and a young child’s teeth (18 months to 5 years).

Families can access How to brush videos on their phone using the QR code. They are also available in 17 languages.



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## Why talk about toothbrushing at Storytime?

Keeping children's teeth healthy is an essential part of keeping their whole bodies well – and gives them what they need to enjoy a lifetime of decay-free teeth and bright healthy smiles.

Australia's dental health guidelines tells us that practicing daily habits, like brushing teeth, having regular dentist check-ups, and choosing healthy foods and drinks, are the best way to keep teeth healthy and prevent tooth decay.

As children grow, they are learning to do more and more tasks. We can help children learn that brushing teeth is something we do every day to keep teeth clean and strong, just like we teach them to wash their hands and cover their coughs.

We can help make brushing teeth fun! We've reframed everyday dental health practices as fun activities to engage kids and foster learning. Simple things such as stories and conversations about

teeth and how we take care of them, helps children become familiar with and develop a positive attitude – an important first step for children that goes a long way towards establishing the healthy habits that set them up for life.

Modelling these activities can be helpful for families, to keep the fun going at home.

Making toothbrushing part of their routine helps children understand that brushing teeth is something we do every day. Routines help children know what to expect and when to expect it. Setting up a routine at bedtime (and mornings) helps children understand and prepare for regular daily activities.

Talking about their bedtime routine - the regular activities that help them get ready for bed and a good night's sleep – helps children feel involved.

### Evidence

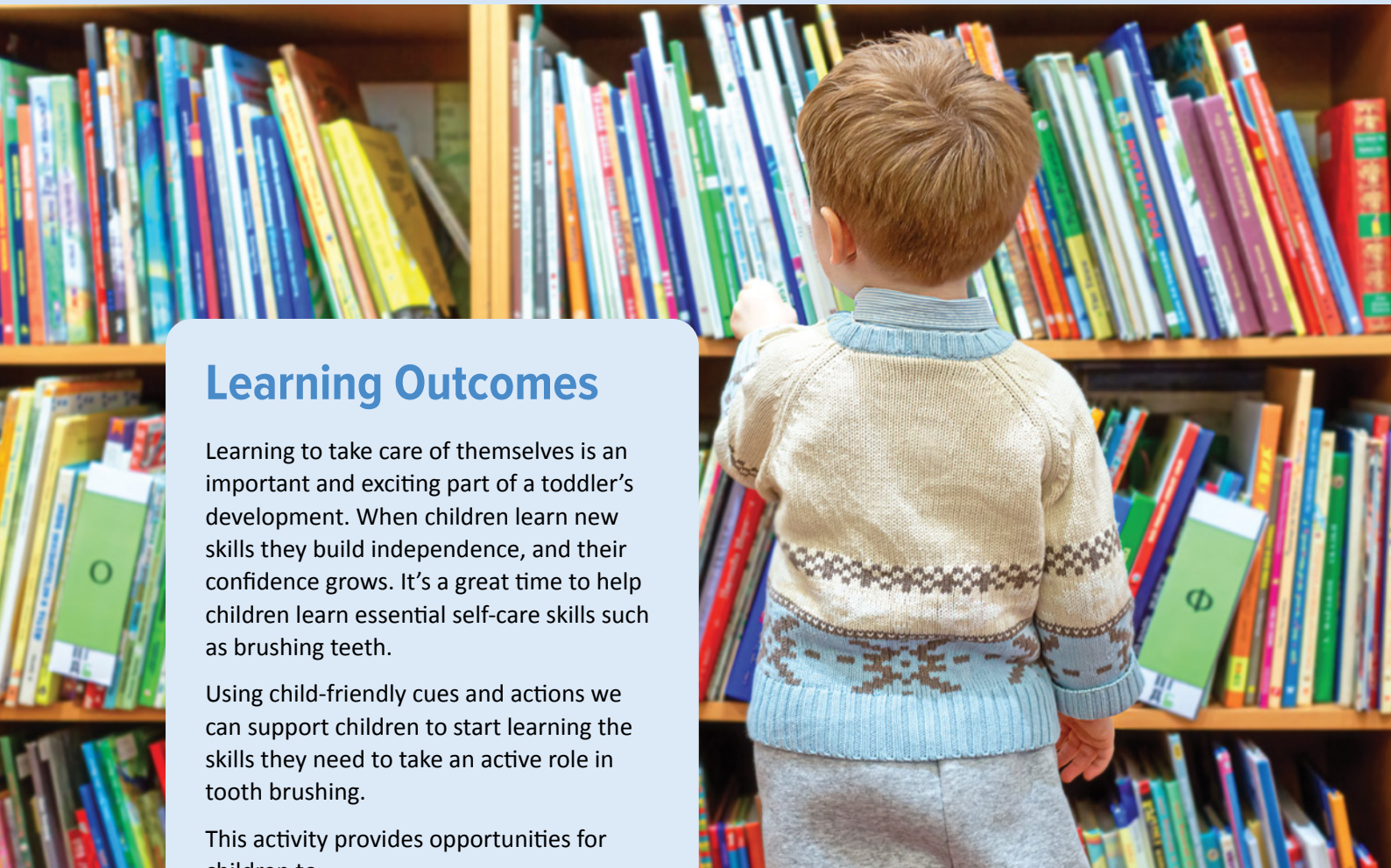
**Australian dental health** guidelines tell us these are the most important things we can do:

(From the age of 6 months through to 3 years babies will have their full set of baby teeth)

Start cleaning baby's gums and teeth as soon as teeth arrive.

- Gently brush teeth with a small, soft toothbrush without toothpaste.
- From 18 months of age use a pea-size amount of low-fluoride toothpaste.
- Help your child to brush their teeth and gums twice a day – in the morning and at night before bed.

National Oral Health Promotion Clearing House, 2011, 'Oral health messages for the Australian public. Findings of a national consensus workshop'. Australian Dental Journal, 56(3), 331-335.



## Learning Outcomes

Learning to take care of themselves is an important and exciting part of a toddler's development. When children learn new skills they build independence, and their confidence grows. It's a great time to help children learn essential self-care skills such as brushing teeth.

Using child-friendly cues and actions we can support children to start learning the skills they need to take an active role in tooth brushing.

This activity provides opportunities for children to

- become familiar with cues and actions (instructions) they can adopt and take an active role in brushing their teeth
- build a sense of child agency by encouraging children to take increasing responsibility in basic health routines
- practice toothbrushing techniques (fine motor skills: circles, back-and-forth), and learn words (cues for brushing: circles, inside/outside, top/bottom, back-and-forth)
- develop an understanding that brushing teeth is something we do everyday – part of our bedtime routine

VEYLDF LO3: Wellbeing - Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

(Department of Education and Training & Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority 2016, *Victorian early years learning and development framework: for all children from birth to eight years*, Department of Education and Training, Melbourne.)

## For more information

### **DHSV – Keeping Teeth Healthy**

[www.dhsv.org.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/151460/Keeping-Teeth-Healthy.pdf](http://www.dhsv.org.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/151460/Keeping-Teeth-Healthy.pdf)

### **Raising Children Network – search for Dental care**

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

### **Better Health Channel – Toothbrushing: 0-6 years**

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/toothbrushing-children](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/toothbrushing-children)



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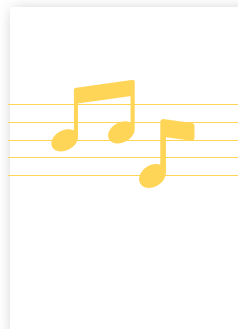
# Resources



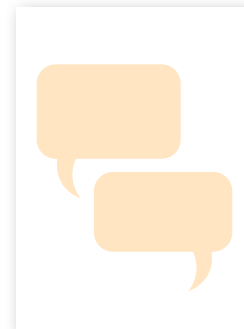
You can find all the **Healthy Little Smiles Storytime** resources here:  
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**Puppet play activity**



**Sing a song**



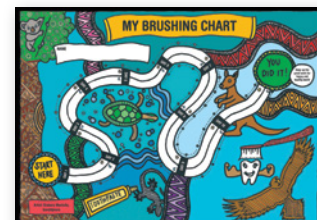
**Talking points**



**Let's brush!** A4 poster,  
translated versions available



**It's fun to brush** A4  
toothbrushing chart

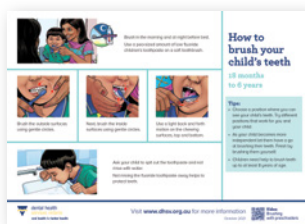


**My Brushing Chart**  
A4 poster





**Keeping teeth healthy**  
A4 handout



**How to brush your child's teeth**  
A4 handout



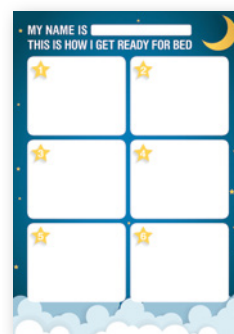
**Deadly Tooth Tips**  
A4 trifold



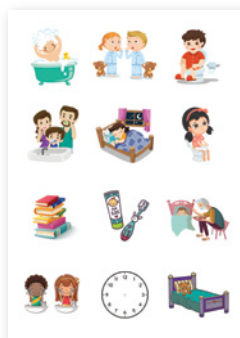
**Let's sing + brush**  
more song ideas



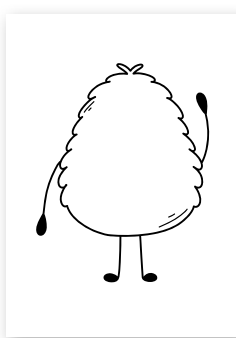
**Picture of teeth**



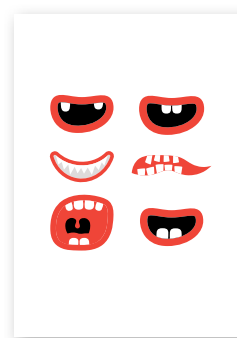
**This is How I Get Ready for Bed**



**This is How I Get Ready for Bed** sticker sheet



**Create-a-monster**



**Pick a monster mouth**

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**Healthy Little Smiles at Storytime** was developed by Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV), the leading public oral health agency in Victoria, in collaboration with a number of key early childhood organisations, early childhood professionals, supported playgroup facilitators and families.

The Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles initiative is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services.

The dental health information is based on the evidence-based Oral Health Messages for the Australian Public. The information relates to young children, from birth to 5 years, and represents the most up to date recommendations in Australia.

**Healthy Little Smiles at Storytime** is informed by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), the state's framework that describes the principles, practices and outcomes that support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age.

This document describes the generally accepted knowledge at the time of publication. It is only a guide and is a general summary of early childhood oral health knowledge. Readers are encouraged to update their knowledge on early childhood oral health through a continued partnership with the Health Promotion Unit of Dental Health Services Victoria.

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