



KidsHealth.org/classroom

Teacher's Guide

This guide includes:

- Standards
- Related Links
- Activities for Students
- Reproducible Materials

Standards

This guide correlates with the following National Health Education Standards:

Children will:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

National Health Education Standards: www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm

Activities in this guide also correlate with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes. These outcomes are denoted on each individual activity.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/elof-ohs-framework.pdf>

The following unit includes five early literacy-based health activities focused on oral health. Choose one daily to help your children explore oral health practices over the course of a week.

KidsHealth Links to Share

Articles for Kids:

Movie: Teeth

KidsHealth.org/en/kids/teeth-movie.html

Taking Care of Your Teeth

KidsHealth.org/en/kids/teeth-care.html

What's a Cavity?

KidsHealth.org/en/kids/cavity.html

Going to the Dentist

KidsHealth.org/en/kids/go-dentist.html

Reproducible Materials:

Chart: Healthy Teeth and Gums

Activity Cards: Nemours Reading BrightStart! Alphabet Cards

Picture Cards: Oral Health Compound Words

Writing Page: Steps to a Healthy Smile

Assessment: Print Awareness Checklist



Caring for Our Teeth

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LC2: Understand and respond to increasingly complex communication and language from others.
- P-LC6: Understand and use a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Identify how to care for their teeth.
- Name the tools used to promote dental health (toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss).

Materials:

- Suggested Book – I Care for My Teeth – Martha E.H. Rustad (or any picture book about dental health)
- Dry erase marker (in the color of your choice)
- Chart: Healthy Teeth and Gums. Use the dry erase marker to draw plaque on the teeth.
- Page protector (place chart inside)
- Toothbrush
- Kid flossers or dental floss (one for each child)

Class Time:

15 - 20 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about our teeth and how to keep them healthy. Today, I brought in a book for us to read together to learn more about teeth. I also brought some special tools that we use to keep our teeth healthy! Who's ready to learn all about our teeth?

Introduce the Book

- **Demonstrate proper book handling and point to each word of the title as you read:**
Today, I brought a new book with me! Does anyone see the title of my book? Reach way down into your pocket and pull out your pretend binoculars to see if you can find the title. Hmm... I am looking down here...I am looking over there...Yes, (child's name) found the title and the author! This book is called I Care for My Teeth. It is written by Martha E. H. Rustad.
- **Allow children to see the front and/or back cover of the book to make predictions:**
Do you notice what the little girl is doing on the front cover? Yes, she is using a special tool called a toothbrush to brush her teeth! So, if she is brushing her teeth, what do you think this book will be about? Yes, you are correct, this book is about caring for your teeth! Why do you think the author wrote this book? What does she want us to learn? Let's take a quick flip through the pictures inside to see if it helps us answer those questions. Those are all great answers! It looks like the author wrote this book to help us learn how to care for our teeth and keep them healthy!

**Read and Introduce Vocabulary**

- **As you read, include opportunities for discussion and introduce vocabulary:**

Look here, in this picture! The little girl is using her toothbrush and toothpaste to brush her teeth. Toothpaste cleans your teeth. We don't need a lot of toothpaste on our toothbrush, just a tiny bit – a pea size amount – is perfect. The girl in the book says, "I brush my teeth twice a day. I brush for two minutes." Why do you think she does that? Those are some great answers! Let's see if we can figure this out together. Look at the teeth here on our board. They are covered in plaque. Plaque is the sticky stuff that builds up on your teeth. It has germs that can cause cavities. Cavities are holes in your teeth. We brush to prevent our teeth from getting holes in them!

Time to brush! Watch how I use this toothbrush and brush the teeth on our board for just ten seconds. Count with me, one...two...three...four...five...six...seven...eight...nine...ten! Did I get all of the plaque off? No way! So, we brush our teeth twice a day for two minutes to make sure that we get all of the plaque off of our teeth to help prevent cavities.

- **Explore the image of the young girl flossing her teeth with children and introduce vocabulary:**
The little girl is using a flosser in this picture to get the plaque out from in between her teeth. Do you know what a flosser is? Those are great answers. A flosser is a tool that helps get plaque out from between your teeth and gums.
- **As you discuss flossing teeth, introduce a flosser (or dental floss) and its use:**
Have you ever had your teeth flossed before? When we visit the dentist our teeth are flossed for us during the visit. Your mom or dad may floss your teeth at home. The floss goes in between your teeth and moves back and forth. I brought some flossers for you to take home today and practice with your mom or dad.

Read and Expand Learning Concepts with Children

- **Integrate concepts with previous knowledge:**
Wow! Our book tells us that eating healthy foods and drinking milk and water help keep our teeth strong and healthy! Do you remember what we need to do to keep our bodies healthy? Yes!! We need to do those same things! Eating and drinking healthy foods and drinks – along with exercise – will keep our bodies healthy, too.
- **Make real-world connections to events in children's lives:**
Look at this picture of the girl in our book visiting the dentist. Have any of you been to the dentist? What was it like? (Child's name) told us about how (he/she) visited the dentist last week and got a new toothbrush! Going to the dentist is a great way to keep your teeth healthy!

Summary Statement

Today we learned how to keep our teeth healthy. We have to brush twice a day, floss, have healthy foods and drinks, and visit the dentist. I'm glad we learned all about teeth together today. Thanks for reading with me!



Letters, Letters Everywhere

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LIT3: Identify letters of the alphabet and produce the correct sounds associated with letters.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Name or point to letters of the alphabet.
- Produce the sounds associated with specific letters.
- Locate letters within the classroom environment.
- Identify the shape of specific letters.

Materials:

- Activity Cards: Nemours Reading BrightStart! Alphabet Cards
- Toothbrush (one for each child)

Class Time:

10 - 15 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about dental health. Our book, I Care for My Teeth, is filled with words that tell us how to care for our teeth. We see words on the front cover, the back cover, and the pages of the book. Did you know those words are made up of letters? Today, we are going to learn some of the special letters in our book. Who's ready to explore with me?

Introduce the Materials

- **Gather an assortment of Nemours Reading BrightStart! Alphabet Cards that represent the letters in the title of the book. Place them within reach of the children and allow them to explore:**
Look at these Alphabet Cards! Each one has a special letter printed on it. Do you recognize these letters? Some letters will be familiar, and others might be new.
- **Explain the purpose of the activity and clarify the instructions:**
Let's play a game! Each of you will choose one Alphabet Card. We will work together to identify the letter's name, sound, and shape. Let's try one!

Incorporate Multisensory Learning as You Engage With Children and Offer Encouragement

- **Search for the letter within the title of the book:**
(Child's name), please choose one Alphabet Card. Great job! You selected the letter (letter name). Look at the front cover of my book. Do you see this letter in the title? Yes! You found it! You found the letter (letter name) in the word, (name of word).



- Sing a letter chant with the children, allowing them to review the name and sound of the letter:

(Sing to the tune of: If You're Happy and You Know It)

If you think you know this letter say its name! (Pause)

If you think you know this letter say its name! (Pause)

If you think you know this letter then tell it to a friend! (Pause)

If you think you know this letter make its sound! (Pause)

- **Encourage children to move around the room in search of the letter in the classroom:**
Would you like to join me on a letter hunt? Get ready to search for the letter (letter name) in the room. Remember to search up high and down low. When you find the letter (letter name), shout it out and return to your seat.
- **Encourage each child to trace the letter on each Alphabet Card using a toothbrush.**
Now, we are ready to trace the letter on our cards with a toothbrush. Each letter of the alphabet has a special shape. We are going to trace the special shape of the letter (letter name), just like we would brush our teeth, up and down, and side to side as we follow the lines of the letter. Watch me as I trace the letter. You try it!
- Repeat the activity several times as long as children are engaged.
- Be sure each child has successful opportunities to participate before moving on.

Summary Statement

Today we named letters, reviewed their sounds, and learned about their special shapes. Thanks for playing with me!



Dental Picture Puzzles

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LIT1: Demonstrate awareness that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sound.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Blend two small words to create one larger word.
- Segment larger words into two smaller words.

Materials:

- Picture Cards: Oral Health Compound Words

Class Time:

10 - 15 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about our teeth and how to keep them healthy. Today, we are going to use our picture cards and play a fun listening game! Get your listening ears ready!

Promote Compound Word Awareness by Singing a Song

- **Introduce new song:**

Listen to the fun, new song I have for us today. See if you can hear any of the words we have been talking about.

(Sing to the tune of: Three Blind Mice)

I brush my teeth. I brush my teeth.

Twice a day. Twice a day.

First comes the toothpaste, I brush so good.

Then I rinse and floss just like I should.

My teeth sparkle, I knew they would.

I brush my teeth. I brush my teeth.

Did you hear any of the words we have been talking about? Yes! Brush...teeth...toothpaste...floss! You all are great listeners.

- **Encourage the children to sing or chant the new tune with you:**

Let's sing the song again but this time I would like for you to sing our song with me. Are you ready?

I brush my teeth. I brush my teeth.

Twice a day. Twice a day.

First comes the toothpaste, I brush so good.

Then I rinse and floss just like I should.

My teeth sparkle, I knew they would.

I brush my teeth. I brush my teeth.

Now that we warmed up our listening ears, let's play a sound game together with some of the words we have been talking about.



Introduce the Materials

- **Place picture cards within reach of the children and allow them to explore:**
Look at these! I wonder what pictures we have today. Can someone tell me what you see in the pictures? Yes, these look like some pictures from our book. Today, we will play a word game with these picture cards.
- **Explain the purpose of the game and clarify the instructions:**
We are going to work as a team to put words together and take them apart! I will show two pictures and say their names, then we will use the pictures to make a new word.

Practice Listening to Compound Words Together

- **Demonstrate how to blend and segment words:**
Look at these pictures. This is a tooth and this is a brush. If I put the picture of the tooth next to the picture of the brush, I can make a new word. Toothbrush! What's the word? Yes, Toothbrush! The word "toothbrush" is a compound word. That's when you put two small words together to make one big word.
- Now, let's move the pictures apart and say the words slowly. Tooth...brush. Let's slide the pictures back together and say it fast. Toothbrush! Great work, friends.
- **Encourage each child to blend and segment words:**
Now let's try another word. I am going to give you two new picture cards. Can you tell me what you see in this picture? Yes, you see the pictures labeled "mouth" and "wash." Go ahead and push the pictures of "mouth" and "wash" together and say the words fast. Yes! It's mouthwash! Mouthwash is a liquid that older kids and grown-ups swish in their mouths to keep their teeth clean along with brushing and flossing. Now, let's move the pictures apart and say the word slowly. Mouth...wash. Great work (Child's name)!
- **Repeat the activity several times using each of the compound word pairs (toothbrush, mouthwash, toothpaste).**
- **Be sure each child has successful opportunities to participate in the activity before moving on.**

Summary Statement

Today we sang a fun song about brushing our teeth. We learned how to add two small words together to make one large compound word. We also learned how to take compound words apart! Thanks for playing and listening with me!



Steps to a Healthy Smile

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LIT6: Write with a variety of purposes using increasingly sophisticated marks.

Objectives:

Children will:

- Use their knowledge of dental health to place brushing steps in order and then draw a picture of their teeth.
- Demonstrate increasing strength, control, and coordination of the small muscles used for writing and drawing

Materials:

- Writing Page: Steps to a Healthy Smile
- Chart: Healthy Teeth and Gums (for children to use as visual support when they draw)
- Small mirrors
- Writing materials: colored pencils, markers, crayons
- Scissors
- Glue

Class Time:

15 - 20 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about our teeth and how to keep them healthy. Today, we will talk more about the order of the steps we use when brushing our teeth. When we finish cutting and gluing, we are going to draw a picture of our mouth and teeth! Then, we can share our pictures with our classmates! Are you ready?

Introduce the Activity

- **Discuss the materials and how to use them:**
Each of you has a writing page in front of you. Look at the bottom of the page and tell me what you see. Yes, these are the different steps for brushing our teeth. Today we are going to cut them out and put them in the right order on our paper.
- **Demonstrate how to use scissors and glue and encourage children to follow along:**
Watch how I use my scissors to cut along the dotted line and remove the pictures from my writing page. Now, we're ready to cut out the small squares. Look at our paper. I see the words "first," "next," "then" and "last." Which one of these pictures do we do first when we brush our teeth? Yes, first we put the toothpaste on the brush. So, let's glue that picture in the square next to the word "first." What do we do next? You all remember, next we brush our teeth and then rinse our mouth! Let's glue those down and see if we can decide what to do last. Yes, we floss our teeth after our mouth is nice and clean. Great sequencing!
- **Model an example of drawing and writing as you talk with the children about the writing process:**
Now that we remember the steps to brush our teeth, we are going to draw a picture of our healthy teeth and gums in this area of our writing page. Watch how I look in the mirror and draw a picture of my smile with sparkly teeth. First, I draw my mouth with pink healthy gums. Then I can draw all of the teeth inside of my mouth.



Offer Encouragement

- **Hand out small mirrors, and encourage children to look at their mouth and independently draw their smile:** What do you see when you look in the mirror? Are your teeth pointy or are they flat? Now, draw a picture of your healthy teeth and gums.
- **Compliment and praise the children on their attempts at writing:** Wow! Look at all the detail you are using. Keep it up! You are going to have a wonderful drawing when you are finished. I see you are taking your time. Your mouth and teeth look fantastic!

Share and Discuss Drawings

- **Encourage each child to share his drawing and writing:** Who would like to tell us about their drawing? Thank you, (child's name), for sharing! You have a beautiful smile. Continue until each child has had a chance to share.

Summary Statement

Today we drew pictures of our healthy smiles and we shared our pictures with friends! Thank you for drawing and sharing with me today!



Exploring Print

Literacy Standard:

This activity correlates with the following Head Start Early Learning Outcomes:

Children will:

- P-LIT2: Demonstrate an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).

Objectives:

Children will:

- Identify the features (parts) of a book (author, illustrator, front cover, back cover, title page, and table of contents).
- Explore the conventions (rules) of print (tracking left to right and how to hold a book).

Materials:

- Assessment: Print Awareness Checklist
- Suggested Book - I Care for My Teeth - Martha E. H. Rustad (or any picture book about dental health)

Class Time:

10 - 15 minutes

Activity:

Clarify Learning Objectives

This week, we are learning about our teeth and how to keep them healthy. Today, we will use our book to identify the different ways printed words are organized. Are you ready to read with me?
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Introduce the Features of the Book

- **Place the book, I Care for My Teeth, within reach of the children**
- **Allow children to explore the parts of the book:**
Look at this book! What do you see? Yes! You see the front cover. The front cover tells us the name of the book and the name of the author. Touch the name of the book. Now, touch the name of the author. I wonder what you would see if you flip this book on its side. That's right! You'll see the spine of the book.
- **Direct children to the Title Page:**
When I open the book to the first page, I see a title page. Can someone tell me how we might use this? A title page tells us when and where the book was published or printed.
- **Direct children to the Table of Contents:**
Look at the table of contents. What do you see? Yes! You see numbers and words. The words tell us the sections or parts of the book and the page numbers show us where to find those sections. How many sections are in this book? Touch and count them with me. One...two...three. There are three sections in this book.

Introduce the Conventions of Print

- **Allow children to explore the rules of print as you assess knowledge of where to begin reading a book:** (Child's name), use your hands to hold this book the correct way. Now, turn to the page where we begin reading. Great job!



Touch the picture on this page. It's a picture of a girl brushing her teeth. Touch the words on this page. Thank you, (child's name)! You found the picture and the words. We look at the pictures and we read the words. Say that with me! (Encourage children to repeat the phrase).

- **Assess knowledge of directionality:**

(Child's name), find the next page. Thank you! I like the way you gently turned the page in the book. I see more words on this page. Can you show me how to read these words? Yes! We read these words from top to bottom and left to right. Just like we brush our teeth! Watch me track the words!

- **Use your finger to track words in a sweeping motion as you sing the following chant. Encourage children to sing and track print with you:**

(Sing to the tune of: Oh My Darling)

Top to bottom.

Top to bottom.

Top to bottom, left to right.

That's the way the words are written.

Top to bottom, left to right.

- **Assess knowledge of one-to-one correspondence and concept of word:**

The first words I read are on the top of this page. It says, "I brush for two minutes." How many words are written? Clap and count with me. I (clap)... brush (clap)... for (clap)... two (clap)... minutes (clap). How many times did you clap? That's right! You clapped five times because there are five words written. One...two...three...four... five.

Touch the word, brush. This is one word, but it is made up of many letters. How many letters do you see in the word "brush?" Tap and count them with me. B (tap)...R (tap)...U (tap)...S (tap)... H (tap). How many times did you tap? That's right! You tapped five times because there are five letters in this word. One...two...three...four...five.

- **Continue to review these important skills as you move through the remaining pages of the book.**

- **(Optional) Use the Print Awareness Checklist, as you engage, to record each child's progress.**

Summary Statement

Today we read a book about caring for our teeth and we learned about the parts of a book and how to read! Thanks for reading and learning with me today.