

PARENT'S GUIDE

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL HAPPIER ABOUT VISITING THE DENTIST

Ways for parent's/carer's to **SUPPORT** their child using the green guide

Introduction

- Many people feel anxious about visiting the dentist
- Approximately 1 in 5 young people experience dental anxiety
- Dental anxiety can become a problem when people are not able to have certain dental treatments done without feeling upset or angry
- The green guide will help your child understand their worries and the tools they can use to help them feel less scared Talking about dental anxiety will not make your child more scared, it can really help if they have the opportunity to talk about their worries
- Make time to read and discuss the guide with your child
- Help your child write their 'message to dentist' and share this with the dentist
- Once the appointment is over help your child think about how the appointment went and plan for next time.

www.lttf.com/dental

PARENT'S GUIDE

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL HAPPIER ABOUT VISITING THE DENTIST

Other ways to SUPPORT your child

1. Show your child positive ways of coping when you visit the dentist together

Try to relax, avoid saying anything negative which could increase your child's fear.

2. Understand and recognise your child's needs

Try to recognise why and when your child is feeling worried so you can support them.

3. Have Patience

Children can sense if their parents are frustrated or angry with them and this can make them worse. Keeping calm will help your child feel happier and more in control of the situation

4. Promote new skills and teamwork

Parents, children and dentists all need to work together to ensure that the child has a positive dental experience.

5. Offer practical and emotional support

Encourage your child to think about the different tools they can use to help them cope (e.g. play music, squeeze a stress ball, agree with the dentist a stop signal)

6. Reward and praise their efforts

Young people really respond to encouragement, praise and rewards. Young people need rewards rather than bribes. Rewards are where you give positive outcomes for positive behaviour. They are planned and help children work towards goals for their visit to the dentist

7. Talk about it

Young people want to know that they can ask their parents questions about visiting the dentist and share their worries. Be honest. Don't try and keep their appointment or what they will be having done a secret. Remind them of previous dental visits when they coped well and overcame their fears.