

The Dentist

A Rhyming Multi-Sensory Story



Introduction

A step by step multi-sensory story for parents, guardians, grandparents, siblings, child-minders, early years workers, teachers, HLTA's, teaching assistants, speech therapists, play therapists, care home workers, home support workers, activity coordinators, storytellers, librarians and anyone with an interest in exploring storytelling through the senses in a fun and engaging way!

Sensory stories immerse the listener by telling a story using words and sensory stimuli (story props). Listening to rhyme and rhythm supports memory and aids learning, playing a crucial role in language development, the learning of concepts, communication and early literacy skills such as listening and attention skills, anticipation, turn-taking and making choices.

The stories are adapted to meet a range of abilities and needs from curious pre-schoolers to teenagers with complex needs. They can be used in mainstream and SEN schools as the combination of sensory stimuli, rhyme and the repetitive structure of the stories forms an excellent base on which to scaffold learning.

Exposure to stimuli allows the listener to engage with new experiences to calm and alert the sensory system, in a safe, therapeutic and fun environment and helps individuals use their senses to understand the world around them.

This story will build the listener's confidence to explore new and unfamiliar sensory experiences. Repeating the story in a safe and comfortable setting, can help the listener to become gradually desensitised to the props, helping to prepare the listener for visits out of their daily routine, in this case, an appointment or encounter with the dentist.

Multi-Sensory Stories & SEN

Sensory stories are an excellent motivating tool for encouraging alternative communication systems. non-verbal, early communication skills, Makaton, BSL, body sign, choose boards, and to facilitate PECS exchanges.

Storytelling in a SEN setting builds a bond between the storyteller and the listener, enhancing wellbeing and enriching their experiences. It builds trust and aids understanding and communication, social and emotional development.

Additional learning is enhanced through the development of turn taking skills, building tolerance, attention skills and sharing. Other learning outcomes are the skills of shared attention, increased engagement, achievement of learning targets, reduction in unwanted behaviours, social interaction and helping individuals to overcome barriers through a safe environment.

Observing reactions to a range of sensory stimuli enables you to build a picture of an individual's sensory preferences. This record of likes, dislikes, motivators and triggers can help parents, carers and teaching staff make informed choices to enhance daily life in areas such as diet, sensory needs, care plans, daily activities and leisure activities.

Exploring the senses through exposure to stimuli (story props), helps to build a bank of motivators that can calm an individual when they are anxious or stressed. Knowing an individual's triggers informs on the writing of behaviour plans and strategies. You may seek to avoid some triggers and work on de-sensitising others that may be necessary e.g. teeth brushing or hair cutting through repeated gradual, exposure to build acceptance and tolerance of the activity.

*Please see the note on allergies on the disclaimer page

*It is important never to force stimuli upon an individual. At any point if they are showing signs that they are not enjoying the experience stop immediately.

How to tell a Multi-Sensory Story

Identify the key words in the story highlighted in **bold**. These are your story props.

Set out your resources where they are easily accessible. A large colourful box with a lid is ideal as its unknown contents provide an air of anticipation and mystery to the listener. Place your resources (props) inside the box in the order in which they will appear in the story.

TIP! Store any scented props in a sealed container, it will make the smell stronger as the air in the container will be fragranced and will waft out when you remove the lid.

Choose a quiet, distraction free place that is comfortable.

Present the box (lid on!) This will act as a visual cue for the listener that you are about to share a story.

Read each sentence slowly and clearly, introducing the story prop as the corresponding word in the sentence appears. There are different options suggested for story props. Follow a total communication approach and try some of the Makaton signs.

Use a variety of facial expressions and gestures to communicate meaning, Allow processing time for the listener to use their senses exploring the stimuli.

At the end of the story, present the listener with the props to freely explore.

At the end of the session, encourage the listener to tidy the props into the story box. This will signify that the story session has ended.

Repeat the same story for a minimum of 2 –3 times a week for a month then change to a different story.

Focus on having fun then and it will become an educational experience!

The Dentist

Story

Prop

Action

We need to look after our teeth and keep them nice and clean

So to help us we visit the **dentist**, who will make them gleam.

Makaton
sign **dentist**

Mirror

To sign **dentist** using Makaton, curl your index finger and tap your front teeth twice.

Can the listener copy the action?

Encourage the listener to explore their teeth in the mirror.

The Dentist

The dentist's room is light and bright and smells a little funny

I feel slightly nervous, like a tickle in my tummy.

Alcohol wipe

Hand sanitiser

Wipe the table or the listener's laptop with an alcohol or **antiseptic** wipe or a little hand sanitiser on a cloth.

The Dentist

<p>The dentist wears a shirt, of the darkest green</p>	Shirt	<p>Place the shirt over the listener's clothing.</p>
<p>She tells me it protects from the dirt to keep her nice and clean.</p>		<p>Practice self-care skills, can the listener put the item on independently?</p>
		<p>Can the listener communicate a request for 'help' if they would like assistance?</p>
<p>'I'll take good care' the dentist says, as I lie back in the chair</p>	Bicycle or balloon pump	<p>Gently direct the air flow at the listener's hands/cheeks/lips/ teeth.</p>
<p>With a big smile she tickles my hand, with a blast of air.</p>		<p>Can the listener activate the pump to release the air?</p>
		<p>Can the listener communicate a request for 'help' if they would like assistance?</p>

The Dentist

<p>The dentist gives me a little bib, it tucks under my chin</p> <p>She says that when I say I'm ready, that we will begin</p>	<p>Bib, napkin, paper towel or flannel</p>	<p>Loosely tuck into the neck of the listener's clothing or lay flat over their chest.</p>
<p>The dentist wear goggles to stop the lights that glare</p> <p>They look like big sun-glasses, she offers me a pair.</p>	<p>Goggles sunglasses or mirror</p>	<p>The storyteller and the listener both wear a pair of sun-glasses/goggles.</p> <p>Encourage the listener to look at their reflection in the mirror.</p>
<p>The dentist says words like 'Mouth open wide'</p> <p>Then gently with her fingers, she takes a peek inside.</p>	<p>Mirror</p>	<p>Encourage the listener to open their mouth to your cue of 'Open wide' whilst they look in the mirror.</p>

The Dentist

There is a special toothbrush used to clean my teeth	Electric toothbrush	Explore the sensation of the electric toothbrush or massager on the back of the hand.
It hums and spins round and round and cleans right underneath	Mini Massager	Encourage the development of the listener's fine motor skills.
	Toothpaste	Can they remove the toothpaste tube lid?
	Manual toothbrush	Can they apply the toothpaste to the brush?
		Can they brush their teeth independently?
	Bowl	Can the listener communicate a request for help if they would like assistance?
Water		
Mirror	Enouragement and praise as the listener admires their clean teeth in the mirror	
	As an alternative to toothpaste, offer the listener fresh mint or fennel seeds to chew.	
Fresh mint or fennel seeds		

The Dentist

The dentist says I need to rinse my mouth with a wash that is bright pink	Child-friendly mouthwash Water	Open the lid of the mouthwash and gently waft for the listener to smell.
I swish it around my teeth and gums then spit it down the sink	Plastic cup	Pour a tiny amount into a container and encourage the listener swish the mouthwash around their mouth then spitt it out into a sink or bowl.
	Sink or bowl	Model if necessary.
The dentists says 'that's it, all done!' and offers me a sticker	Sticker	Offer the listener a sheet of stickers to choose one
I'm surprised that we are finished, my visit couldn't have been quicker!		Can the listener peel the sticker from the backing paper independently and stick it onto their clothing.
		Can the listener communicate a request for assistance if required?

Oral Hygiene Strategies



Strategies

The oral stimulation and sensory input required for brushing our teeth can be overwhelming for an individual with sensory issues and special needs.

Below are some of the issues that may be barriers to dental hygiene and suggested strategies.

It's Time Consuming

Two minutes is a long time to engage in teeth brushing.

Provide a visual aid such as a digital timer, sand timer, egg timer or a stopwatch.

Add a visual schedule. This will enable individuals how many steps there are in the process, where they are up to and what is coming next.

Maintain a Routine

Ensure that teeth brushing takes place at the same time every morning and evening.

Offer praise and allow the individual to choose a motivating activity to look forward to after they have brushed their teeth. This could be sharing a book, playing a game or looking at photos.

Sensory Overload

For an over responsive sensory system, brushing the teeth can be an uncomfortable sensation, it may hurt or tickle. Reassure the individual that you understand this and that you are there to help.

The Toothpaste

Mint toothpastes can present as 'hot' and may even feel like they 'burn' to an individual who is sensitive to strong flavours. Use an unflavoured toothpaste.

oraNurse® Unflavoured Toothpaste

oraNurse® is an unflavoured toothpaste specially formulated for people sensitive to strong flavours.

The toothpaste was initially developed in a response to the need of autistic children sensitive to taste to the extent of not liking the taste of water.

oraNurse® has the daily recommended fluoride and is SLS free (non-foaming).

A twelve year old with Autism who has an oversensitive sensory system tested oraNurse® unflavoured toothpaste. He only eats bland food and finds strong smells and flavours overwhelming.

He responded well to the toothpaste's plain white colour and smooth texture (he will not use coloured toothpastes, dislikes 'grainy' sensations and the appearance, taste or texture of gel toothpastes).

The non-foaming feature was fantastic as toothpaste froth makes him gag. It left the teeth beautifully clean and the breath fresh. When it came to brushing the teeth at bedtime, he was quite happy to use the toothpaste again. This was very positive as when he is tired at the end of the day tooth brushing time can be a bit of a battlefield!

Other possible indications for the need of an unflavoured toothpaste include;

Lichen Planus sufferers.

Head and neck cancer patients after radiotherapy.

Burning mouth syndrome.

Asperger syndrome. Autism.

Sjögrens syndrome

Behcets disease

Kawasaki disease

Parkinson's diseases.

People that have an intolerance to Limonene.



Colgate Magic Toothpaste

Colgate Magic Toothpaste

Colgate Kids Magic Toothpaste is a colour changing toothpaste! It encourages the development of good oral habits.

My tester was an 8 year old boy with MLD (mild learning difficulties) who needs motivation to brush his teeth due to the length and repetitive nature of the task.

He loved the appearance of the toothpaste. It is a clear gel with blue particles in it, describing it as having 'magic sparkles' that looked like 'glitter'. He was very motivated to brush his teeth for longer as he could watch the colour of the toothpaste gradually turn from clear, to white, light blue to a deep blue!



Colgate Fruit Flavoured Kids Toothpaste

Colgate Natural Fruit Flavoured Kids Toothpastes are available for ages 0-2 years and 3-5 years, it is also suitable for adults to use as a daily toothpaste.

This toothpaste was a hit with my young testers who found the strawberry flavour novel and fun to use.

The toothpaste was also tested by Ruth, a 24-year-old lady with a learning disability.

Historically Ruth has faced challenges with her oral hygiene. She has sensory issues that limit her diet but does enjoy strawberry milkshakes, smoothies and yogurts. Her care worker gradually de-sensitised Ruth to using the toothpaste

by first allowing her to explore a little of the paste in her fingers. She then built up to applying a little dot of the paste onto the lips from where Ruth licked it and explored the paste on her tongue. The carer contacted me after a week to inform me that Beth is happy for her carer to clean her teeth using the toothpaste which is applied with a soft cloth. This is a huge achievement for Ruth!



Other Toothpastes

Individuals with under-sensitive sensory systems may seek strong flavours.

Experiment with the many flavoured toothpastes on the market: strawberry, fennel, aloe vera, tea tree, coconut and juicy fruit are just a few.

For individuals who respond well to motivating items, explore colour-changing toothpastes, jelly toothpastes and toothpastes that sparkle.

Take the individual shopping and let them choose their own flavour.

The Toothbrush

There are many different types of toothbrush on the market, manual, electric, oscillating and sonic.

Explore different bristle firmness, use a soft-bristled brush for sensitive teeth and gums.

Experiment with the shape of the brush a diamond head is narrower at the top and can help reach into tight spaces around the back teeth.

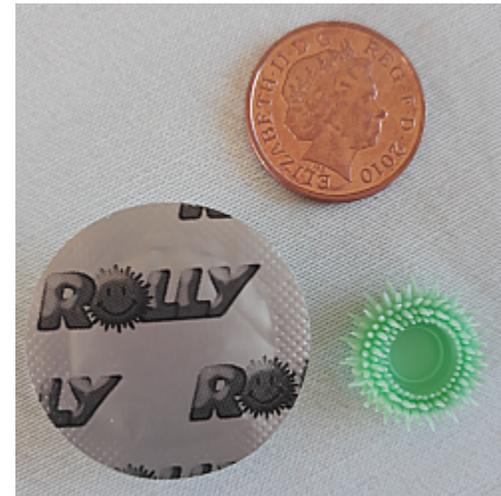
Brightly coloured toothbrushes, toothbrushes with favourite characters on, light-up and musical toothbrushes can be motivating. Let the individual choose their own toothbrush.

Toothbrushes - Rolly Brush

Rolly Brush

Rolly brush is marketed as the smallest toothbrush in the world. It is disposable and requires no toothpaste or water. Pop the mint-flavoured rubber disc onto the tongue and roll around the teeth using the tongue. The mechanical action of the 276 spiky bristles removes food from the teeth cleaning the mouth. The main ingredients of the Rolly brush are mint flavour to refresh your breath xylitol to prevent dental plaque and cavities fluoride to make your teeth stronger.

The Rolly brush was tested by a young lady with a Pervasive Developmental Disorder who needs a lot of motivation to brush her teeth. My tester tried the mint flavour (also available in peach.) It was a fun and positive experience as she enjoyed the novelty of the Rolly brush in that it was so different to the conventional method of using a toothbrush and toothpaste. She liked that she didn't not have to stand in the bathroom as a Rolly brush can be used anywhere. She enjoyed the sensory feedback from the chewing, described her mouth as feeling 'immaculate' and that she was 'happy' she had found a 'fun way' to brush her teeth!



Rolly brush Health and safety

Not recommended for children under five or any individual who may swallow the Rolly.

Do not swallow.

Dispose of in a proper waste receptacle.

Disposable product

Toothbrushes - Colgate MAGIK Brushing Kit

The Colgate MAGIK brushing kit works with an augmented reality Colgate MAGIK smartphone app (available for Android and iOS) that encourages correct brushing techniques by using fun games.

Brush: Open the Colgate Magik app and get brushing

Teach: Games guide where and how to brush

Track: Keep an eye on your child's progress

Reward: Unlock new game experiences via good brushing

Repeat: Build good life-long oral hygiene habits

The App opens a game, the goal of the game is to earn diamonds by brushing away 'Cavity Monsters' that appear on the screen. The diamonds are used to unlock fun new worlds and AR face masks.

My tester was Jacob, a 10 year-old boy with Down Syndrome. Jacob is a reluctant brusher.

Jacob was very keen to open the inviting packaging. The toothbrush was easy to set up. Jacob placed the colorful MAGIK connector onto the end of the toothbrush, he liked the suction cups at the base of the brush as they stuck it to the sink. He needed a little help initially to download the Colgate MAGIK app and to follow the instructions to create his profile avatar then he was ready to go!



This toothbrush is hugely motivating for Jacob and has given him independence in brushing his teeth, he can't wait to open the app and start brushing. His parents track his progress via the app!

Suitable for ages 6+

The Colgate MAGIK brushing kit is currently available to buy on Amazon.

Toothbrushes - Colgate MAGIK Brushing Kit

For older children and adults, Colgate sell a Colgate Connect E1 Smart toothbrush, this also tracks brushing techniques and has some fun games included in the app. <https://shopcolgate.co.uk/pages/e1>

Role Play

Exposing the individual to dental items through role play presents a fun way to engage and can help to desensitise. Include items such as a mask, a range of toothbrushes and toothpastes, floss, a small mirror, joke teeth to brush.

Rewards and Motivators

Use reward charts, stickers or timed iPad access.

Use motivating toothbrushing songs and apps.

Desensitisation Programme

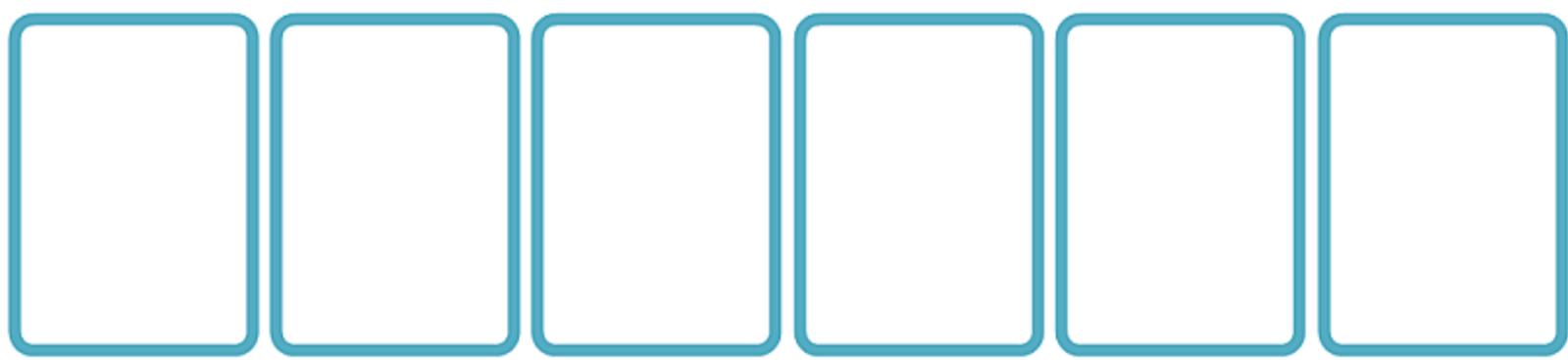
A desensitisation program is a step-by-step guide to completing a task. By taking small steps (called forward chaining,) you can help to desensitise an individual to brushing their teeth.

Desensitisation programmes are personal to the individual and tailored to meet their needs. Below is an example:

1. Start by allowing the individual to explore the toothpaste with no pressure or expectation.
2. Progress to briefly and gently touching the lips with a small amount of toothpaste, offer praise followed by a motivating activity.
3. Encourage the individual to gently rub the toothpaste onto one tooth encouraging using an index finger or a small cloth. Follow with praise and a motivating activity.
4. Continue to work forward in small steps gradually increasing the number of teeth having toothpaste rubbed onto them.
5. Introduce the toothbrush, following the same steps as you did with the toothpaste.
6. Offer consistent praise and reward with the motivating activity.
7. Take steps back in the process (chain) if you need to and build back up again.
8. If a toothbrush is not tolerated, encourage the individual to wipe their teeth clean using a damp soft cloth.

Try adjusting the water temperature. Brushing the teeth in lukewarm water may be more comfortable than cold water.

Visual Schedule for Brushing the Teeth

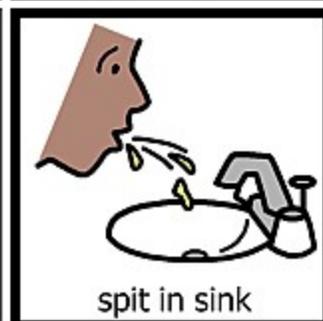
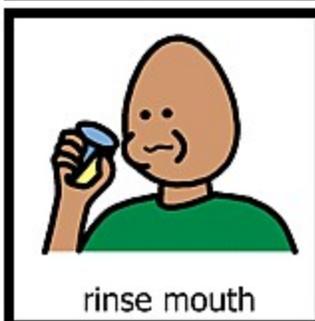
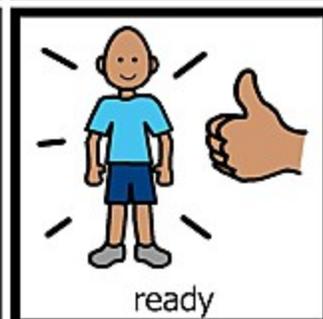
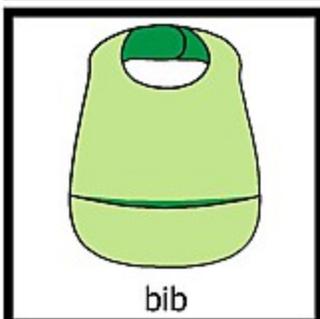
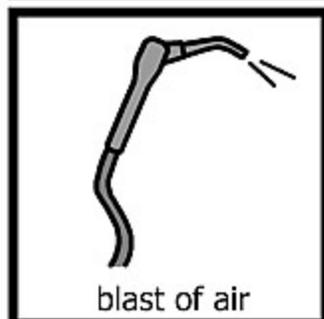
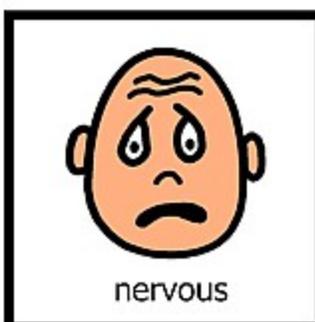
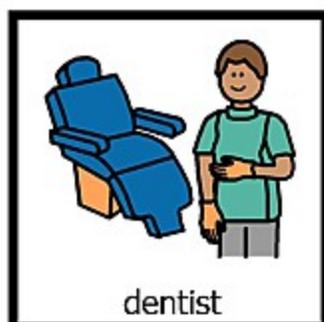


Cleaning your teeth Visual Schedule for The Dentist - Rhyming Multisensory Stories Created using Boardmaker Online

Thanks to Jane Mullen at Jane Mullen Speech Therapy Ltd for providing the visual schedule.

The Dentist Symbols

'The Dentist' (Symbols Created Using Boardmaker Online)



Useful Links

Rhyming Multisensory Stories

www.rhymingmultisensorystories.com

Jane Mullen Speech Therapy Ltd

www.janespeechtherapy.co.uk

RIS Healthcare

www.ris.healthcare

oraNurse®

www.oranurse.co.uk

Rollybrush Uk

www.rollybrush.co.uk

Colgate-Palmolive (U.K) Limited

www.colgate.palmolive.co.uk

Colgate 'Bright Smiles, Bright Futures' school dental hygiene programme

[https://colgate.com/en-gb/bright-smiles-bright-futures/program-materials/for-teachers.](https://colgate.com/en-gb/bright-smiles-bright-futures/program-materials/for-teachers)

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Important Note on Allergies/Intolerances

The activities in these stories are ideas. You are wholly responsible for any activities you decide to carry out. If you are concerned or have doubts regarding any activity or prop used, then seek advice before starting.

Ensure all activities are supervised by a responsible adult and be aware of choking hazards. Check the ingredients in any items you may be using for any potential food or skin allergies or respiratory reactions. If you see any signs of redness, swelling or other symptoms of a suspected reaction seek immediate medical advice.

The interactions should be led by the listener who should be allowed to participate without expectation. Never force stimuli and stop the activity if the listener shows signs that they are not enjoying the session.

Get in Touch!

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