



**Sensory  
Processing  
Service**  
**Tooth Brushing**



**Caring, Learning  
& Growing Together**



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# Tooth Brushing Strategies

- Use a mirror when tooth brushing – you may need a small foot stool for your child to stand on so that they can see in the mirror.
- Trial tooth brushing in an environment where your child feels comfortable, perhaps with a distraction e.g. in front of the TV whilst watching a programme they enjoy, as this may reduce anxiety around tooth brushing.
- Allow your child to choose a tooth brush which they want to use, such as a fun character tooth brush.
- Try using an electric toothbrush. The vibration can be calming and provides a consistent sensation.
- Trial using a flannel with toothpaste on, or a finger brush.
- Allow your child to hold the toothbrush themselves, holding it close to the bristles can give your child more control
- If your child dislikes the flavour of toothpaste trial flavourless toothpaste.
- Use a sand timer as a visual cue for how long tooth brushing will last for, this adds predictability to the task, which can be very reassuring.
- Use a chewy tube before tooth brushing, making sure to chew using the molars at the back as well the front teeth, this can build up an awareness of the different teeth in the mouth and where to brush.



## Other oral proprioceptive activities to trial before tooth brushing:

- Blowing up a balloon or blowing through a straw
- Wind racing cars or trains across the table
- Drinking water through a straw
- Chewy toys or chewellery
- Sour sweets
- Blowing bubbles



Visit:

[sensoryprocessinghub.humber.nhs.uk](https://sensoryprocessinghub.humber.nhs.uk)  
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