

Child's First Visit

We understand that going to the dentist can be intimidating both for your child and for you, the parents, who may have had less-than-fun experiences going to the dentist in the past.

At Joiner and Zwart Dentistry, we want to create a generation of patients who have great experiences going to the dentist, who learn ways to try to prevent cavities, and who grow up to have beautiful, healthy smiles.

The best way for you to prepare your child for their first, or any, dental appointment is NOT to try to prepare them. Just as you wouldn't make a big deal about going to the grocery store or to the gas station, don't put too much emphasis on going to the dentist. Especially, do NOT try to prepare them by "warning" them that "it won't hurt," "it will be easy," "hopefully you won't have any cavities," "they won't do anything today." Statements like these can have unintended connotations that kids will pick up on and start to get nervous. Simply share with your child that they get to go to the dentist – just as if they were going to the zoo or the library. Keep it light, upbeat and positive...even if – especially if – you may be nervous.

If your child asks for more details, you can share with your child that at the dentist they will get to brush their teeth, watch TV on a TV that is on the ceiling, count their teeth, and get a prize! We will help walk your child through all of the details of the appointment once they are at the office. Our goal is the same as yours, for your child to have a fun and happy experience.

WORDS MATTER

In order to improve the chances of your child having a positive experience in your office, we are selective in your use of words. We try to avoid words that scare the child due to previous experiences. Please support us in NOT USING negative words that are often used for dental care.

DON'T use: needle or shot, drill, drill on tooth, pull or yank tooth, examination, hurt (as in "nothing will hurt," kids will think it means there is potential for something to hurt).

DO use: sleepy juice, sleepy jelly, electric toothbrush, Mr. whistle, super straw, clean a tooth, wiggle a tooth out, count teeth, tooth counter, explorer.

Our intention is not to "fool" your child – it is to create an experience that is positive. We desire to avoid using words that may frighten your child when less scary words can be used to describe the experience. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us build a good attitude for your child.

PARENT IN TREATMENT ROOM?

We are happy to offer you the choice of whether to accompany your child in the back during exam and treatment appointments, or to remain in the reception room. We realize that some children may do better having a parent present during their appointments, while some may not do as well if a parent is present. Deciding to stay in the reception area while your child is in the back can be a very good choice for most children. Most kids end up doing much better when their parents give them the opportunity for them to do something by themselves. And remember, we will treat your child with as much respect and compassion as we possibly can.



If you do choose to be present in the treatment area during appointments, we suggest the following guidelines to improve the chances of a positive outcome.

- Allow us to use words to prepare your child.
- Be supportive of the practice's terminology.
- No photos or video recordings without consent from the dentist or assistant.
- Please be a Silent Observer – you may support your child with touches.
 - o This allows us to maintain effective communication with your child. Children will normally listen to their parents instead of us and may not hear our guidance. You might unintentionally give incorrect or misleading information.
- If it is determined that your child may be acting up as a result of you being present in the room, you may be asked to step out of the room, just into the hallway, out of sight of the child.
 - o IF asked to step out, please be ready to immediately walk away.
 - o Many children try to control the situation.
 - o "Acting out" is normal, but unacceptable and unsafe during dental treatment.
 - o Having a parent step out of the room is intended to "short circuit" the control attempt.
 - o We will continue to support your child with compassion at all times.



These are very important ways that you can actively help in the success of your child's visit. We are confident that all will go well and hope the guidelines will help prepare you with confidence for the upcoming appointment.

