

TIP SHEET Successful Dental Visits



A trip to the dentist can be a scary or intimidating experience for a child. A child who has autism or other special needs may have additional and unique challenges related to this experience. Below is a list of items and activities that might help your child to have a successful dental visit:

- Have your child bring a favorite toy or object of attachment to the dentist to help alleviate anxieties.
- Bring a weighted blanket, vest or stuffed toy with you to the dentist to provide deep-pressure input.
- Bring a sensory toy, like a small therapy ball or a sensory brush, with you to the dentist to help calm or distract your child.
- Use music or movies to help calm or distract your child. Some dental offices may provide audio or video equipment upon request or allow you to bring an item with you.
- Use ear plugs to muffle noises that may cause your child stress or discomfort.
- Create and use a visual social strip to show your child each step of the exam process. Contact your dental office before the appointment to make sure that you have all of the steps represented in your strip.
- Create and use communication tools to help your child convey his or her needs during the exam. Common tools include a break board, a tolerance rating scale to communicate if there is pain or discomfort, and a first/then board.
- Before packing all or some of the items on this list, contact your dental office to make sure that the items will be allowed in the exam area.

Disclaimer: This information is provided for reference only. Consult your dentist before engaging in any procedures, practices, or treatments.

These tips were compiled from a variety of sources. For more tip sheets, visit www.fraser.org.