

Going to the Dentist

A free printable social story for ages 3-9

Dental visits combine strange sounds, bright lights, and unfamiliar touch, which makes them a top source of anxiety for many children, especially those with sensory sensitivities. Read this story several times in the week before the appointment so nothing at the office comes as a surprise. Many pediatric dentists also welcome a quick meet-the-chair visit beforehand.

Sometimes I go to the dentist.

The dentist is a helper who keeps my teeth healthy and strong.

First, I wait in the waiting room. I can read a book or play quietly.

When it is my turn, someone calls my name.

I sit in a big chair that moves up and down. It is like a slow ride.

A bright light helps the dentist see inside my mouth.

I open my mouth wide, and the dentist counts my teeth.

The dentist may clean my teeth with a special toothbrush. It can feel tickly and sound buzzy.

If I need a break, I can raise my hand.

Some kids feel nervous at the dentist. That is okay.

I can squeeze my grown-up's hand or take slow breaths.

When we are done, my teeth feel smooth and clean.

I might even get a sticker or a new toothbrush.

Going to the dentist helps my smile stay healthy.

Tips for Reading This Story Together

- Book a short preview visit if the office allows it: sit in the chair, meet the hygienist, hear the tools, then leave.
- Practice at home with a pretend check-up: your child lies back, opens wide, and you count teeth out loud.
- Schedule the appointment at your child's best time of day, usually morning, and avoid stacking it with other demands.
- Establish the raise-your-hand break signal with the dentist at the start of the visit so your child knows it is real.

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