

SPRUCE THE DENTAL HEALTH MOOSE

A Toolkit for Pediatric Primary Care

Updated: October 2026

Spruce The Dental Health Moose

FROM THE FIRST TOOTH

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Spruce Program Overview for Site Leads

A quick guide for implementing Spruce at your practice. Full details follow in the toolkit.

What Spruce Is

Spruce helps pediatric primary care teams incorporate oral health into well-child visits through family oral health kits, educational materials, and conversations with families.

Each base kit includes a toothbrush, floss, two trial-size toothpaste flavors, and an educational bifold. Additional toothbrushes are available for siblings and caregivers.

Your Role as Site Lead

- Serve as the main contact with From the First Tooth (FTFT)
- Keep staff informed about Spruce and the kit workflow
- Respond to FTFT updates and check-ins
- Submit reorder requests and the annual evaluation
- Help staff use Spruce educational materials and encourage oral health conversations during well-child visits
- Maintain communication with FTFT to remain active in the program

At Each Well-Child Visit

- Complete the oral health risk assessment and provider evaluation, and apply fluoride varnish
- Offer a kit and toothbrushes to every family, regardless of insurance or risk assessment score
- Use Spruce educational materials and resources to support conversations about oral health

Your Year at a Glance

- **Start-up:** Receive kits, posters, and resources; brief staff
- **Months 1 to 11:** Distribute kits; FTFT sends supply reminders every 6 months
- **Month 12:** Complete the required annual evaluation

The cycle repeats for up to three funded years.

Reordering Supplies

- To order more supplies, visit: www.fromthefirsttooth.org/order-materials
- Track remaining kits and toothbrushes so one request covers your needs
- Requests are filled in the order received, based on inventory and funding
- If an item runs out, keep distributing what you have

Questions? Email mhfirsttooth@mainehealth.org

Meet Spruce the Dental Health Moose



Spruce the Dental Health Moose (originally introduced as Bruce by the Maine CDC in the 1980s) began as a campaign to promote healthy oral care habits for children. In May 2023, Spruce was relaunched by From the First Tooth (FTFT) in response to pediatric providers' concerns about many families lacking the basic tools needed to establish healthy oral care routines at home.

Today, Spruce builds on FTFT's work to integrate oral health into primary care by providing family oral health kits and educational resources for use during well-child visits. These resources help teams reinforce healthy habits and support families in caring for their teeth at home.

Each base kit includes:

- A pediatric toothbrush
- Floss
- Two flavors of trial size toothpaste (mint and bubblegum)
- An educational bifold

Additional age-appropriate toothbrushes are provided for siblings and caregivers to help support healthy brushing habits across the family.

Designate a Site Lead

When starting the program, each participating site must identify a Spruce site lead. The site lead may be a physician, nurse, medical assistant, or office administrator.

The site lead serves as the primary liaison with FTFT and helps keep staff informed, responds to program updates and check-ins, submits evaluation and reorder requests, and supports program sustainability.

Communication Expectations

Reliable communication helps keep your site actively involved in the program. If we are unable to reach the designated primary contact, FTFT will contact the secondary contact and, if needed, make two phone attempts. If there is still no response by the final deadline, the site may be removed from the active participation list to make space for others on the waitlist.

Program Timeline

Initial start-up

Practices receive initial kits, additional toothbrushes, posters, and resources. Site leads will brief staff on the program and how it fits into the practice's workflow.

Months 1-11: Ongoing distribution

Continue offering kits and using Spruce resources during well-child visits. FTFT sends supply reminders every six months.

Month 12: Annual Evaluation

Complete the required annual evaluation if your site is receiving funded support.

Years 2-3: Repeat the cycle

Continue kit distribution and the annual evaluation process for each additional year of funded participation.

Integrating Spruce into the Clinical Workflow

Continue routine oral health activities during well-child visits, including the oral health risk assessment, provider evaluation, and fluoride varnish application. The oral health risk assessment is also an opportunity to ask families about their access to dental supplies. The following question can help introduce Spruce:

"Our office offers free dental supplies for families. The kit includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss that are typically given out at a dental office. Would you like a family dental kit with your visit today?"

If the family is interested, ask how many additional toothbrushes they need and the ages of those family members.

Additional Toothbrushes

Each initial order of kits will include extra toothbrushes for other family members. These are packaged separately from the base kit and may require some assembly by your care team. Please refer to the chart below for toothbrush types and recommended age ranges.

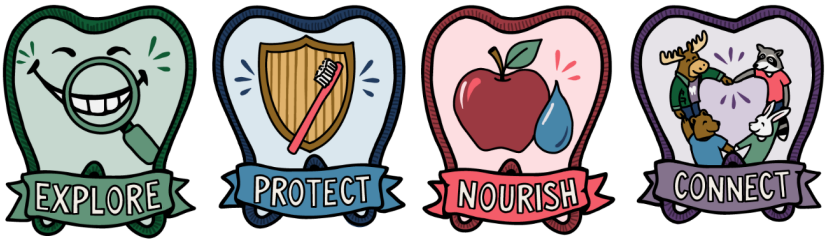
Finger B Toothbrush (Transitional Toothbrush)	Children's Toothbrush	Adult Toothbrush
		
Appropriate for ages 0-4	Appropriate for ages 4-12	Appropriate for ages 12+

Note: Age ranges are approximate and should be guided by each patient's dental development.

Spruce Oral Health Education

Spruce also offers resources to help continue the conversation beyond the kit itself. The Spruce website offers family-friendly oral health information, a dental access map, and translated resources. The QR code on the kit's educational bifold will help families find these resources in their preferred language.

Spruce theme badges can also be used as simple visual prompts during visits or when sharing resources with families. Use the badge that best matches the topic you are discussing to reinforce the conversation and help families connect the message with a practical oral health action or resource.



EXPLORE	PROTECT	NOURISH	CONNECT
Help families learn about their child's oral health and what to expect as their child grows. Use the well-child visit to talk about oral health, answer questions, and share Spruce resources.	Reinforce preventive care, including brushing with fluoridated toothpaste, accessing fluoride through drinking water, using fluoride supplements when appropriate, and protecting teeth with fluoride varnish.	Talk about everyday food and drink choices that support healthy teeth and overall health.	Help families connect with dental care and other oral health resources, including referrals when appropriate.

These themes are intended to be a flexible framework for incorporating oral health into routine visits particularly for young children, and do not represent additional program requirements.

Dental Steps Posters

To support this workflow, Dental Steps posters are sent to each practice at the start of the program. The poster contains a QR code that links to an oral health video series with short videos for each well-child visit from 2 months through age 5. Each video delivers one key piece of oral health information in a simple, family-friendly format to help close the oral health literacy gap. The best way to play the videos depends on what works for your practice. We recommend encouraging parents and caregivers to watch videos during the well-child visit between the MA rooming the patient and the provider entering the room.



Supply Refill

Practices can request additional kits and toothbrushes as their supply runs low by completing the order request form. Requests are filled based on available inventory and funding, in the order received. Because funding is limited and secured annually, FTFT cannot guarantee a specific quantity of supplies.

Tips for Reordering

- Submit your request **before** your kits are completely gone to avoid a gap in distribution.
- Track how many kits and additional toothbrushes remain in your current supply to avoid having to place multiple requests.

Annual Evaluation Requirements

Sites receiving financial support are required to complete one evaluation each year, for up to three years. FTFT will send the evaluation near the end of each program year. Evaluations help assess program impact, identify barriers, and guide improvements. Questions may address kit use, workflow integration, staffing, sustainability, and long-term planning.

Continued Support

FTFT provides financial support for up to three years per site, pending available funding. After the funded participation period, sites are encouraged to continue using Spruce through independent ordering. Sites that are unable to cover the costs of supplies may rejoin the waitlist for future support. The Spruce educational bifold will remain available at no cost through FTFT for ongoing patient education.

Independent Ordering for Ongoing Distribution

Practices may continue distributing Spruce kits beyond the funded participation period by purchasing kits and supplemental items at cost through: Spruce the Moose - My Z Sonic. FTFT can also assist with sustainability planning, transitions, or questions about continuing the program.

Request to Join the Program

Practices eligible to participate include Maine-based practices seeing pediatric patients and those within the MaineHealth system. If your site is not currently participating in the program and would like to be considered for future funding opportunities, please complete our interest form to be added to the participation waitlist. If you have any additional questions about the program or your waitlist status, please email: mhfirsttooth@mainehealth.org

Frequently Asked Questions

- My practice has run out of kits and additional supplies, how do I request more?
    - You may request additional supplies at any time during your 3-year participation period by visiting www.fromthefirsttooth.org/order-materials. Requests are subject to available funding. Practices may also purchase kits directly from the distributor at cost. Contact your FTFT site lead with questions.

- I ran out of some of my supplies and I've been waitlisted for more materials. Do I stop distribution entirely?
    - Please continue distributing kits and supplies as best you can with what you have available. Even if you're missing certain items, families can still benefit from the resources you're able to provide.
- Where can I find Spruce educational materials in other languages?
    - The QR code on the back of the educational material connects families to Spruce resources in additional languages, including Spanish, French, Portuguese, Somali, Arabic, and Lingala.
- Are the kits only distributed to patients with MaineCare?
    - No. Oral health kits can be distributed to any patient, regardless of insurance status or whether they have seen a dentist in the last year. Please see the suggested workflow and oral health risk assessment questions above for guidance.

- My patient recently received oral health services through a school-based oral health program. Are they still eligible for a kit?
    - Yes, many school-based oral health programs do not provide children with toothbrushes.