

Age 1 Dental Visit - Behavior Management

Children display a broad range of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development and a variety of attitudes and temperament. It is important that dental providers have a wide range of behavior guidance techniques to meet the needs of the individual child and be tolerant and flexible in their implementation.

Recommendations

- Communicative Guidance
 - At the beginning of a dental appointment, asking questions with active and reflective listening can help establish trust with a child.
- Tell-Show-Do
 - Verbal explanations of procedures appropriate to the developmental level of the patient (tell); demonstrations for the patient of the visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile aspects of the procedure (show); and then, without deviating from the explanation and demonstration, completion of the procedure (do).
- Ask-Tell-Ask
 - involves inquiring about the patient's visit and feelings toward or about any planned procedures (ask); explaining the procedures through demonstrations and non-threatening language appropriate to the cognitive level of the patient (tell); and again inquiring if the patient understands and how she feels about the impending treatment (ask).
- Positive Reinforcement
 - Positive reinforcement reward desired behaviors thereby strengthening the likelihood of recurrence of those behaviors.
- Distraction
 - Giving the patient a short break during a stressful procedure can be an effective use of distraction prior to considering more advanced behavior guidance technique.

Reference

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (2015). *Guideline on Behavior Guidance for the Pediatric Dental Patient* (2015). Retrieved from http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_BehavGuide.pdf