**Getting your child's senses ready (plain version)**

Developed with Saskia Grassie Children's Occupational Therapist

Getting your child’s senses ready before toothbrushing can help reduce sensory overload and make the experience more enjoyable. It can also be used to make toothbrushing fun. Below are some examples.

**Preparing the mouth before brushing teeth**

* If your child uses a chew tool, you can let them chew on this before brushing
* You can play a gentle teeth ‘tug of war’ with a clean washcloth. Please avoid this activity if they have wobbly teeth
* You could press the outside of your child’s face with the pads of index and middle fingers over the section of teeth you are going to brush next
* You can massage the outer gums with 1-3 sweeps of the pad of finger and thumb or a washcloth
* Using moderate pressure, use the handle of a vibrating toothbrush or toy to press along the jawline
* You can try a face massage

**Oral motor games**

* Blowing bubbles
* Blowing a pin wheel round
* Blowing bubbles into water with a straw
* Blowing a pom pom or cotton wool ball towards a goal or between you both across a table or on the floor
* Making exaggerated animal faces
* Puffing up cheeks and pop them, or experiment with blowing raspberries
* Smacking the lips or make popping noises with the mouth
* If neither of you are sound sensitive, try fart whistles, bird whistles, kazoos and whizzy lips
* Sucking water up through a straw or bendy straw or have a drink from a sports bottle or beaker that needs pressure and lips closed around the spout to activate the flow