Read With Me —
Dental Health

An Educational Backpack for parents and educators to share with children.

For more activity ideas, community events, and parenting information, visit:
Douglas County Building Connections
www.buildingconnectionseci.org:
Greetings ~

We are so happy you have chosen the Read With Me Backpack about Dental Health to share with your child! Research tells us that reading books with a child increases their vocabulary, helps to build a positive and secure relationship with you, and helps prepare them for opportunities in school. By reading stories, talking about the pictures, and spending time together you are setting your child up for a lifetime of success.

Use this guide to make the most of your reading time. Included are ideas for talking with your child about each book in the backpack, related activities and songs to try, and suggestions for carrying out the learning throughout your day.

These backpacks have been brought to you through Building Connections – the Douglas County Early Childhood Initiative. Building Connections is a partnership between early childhood professionals, parents, businesses, government agencies, and community organizations who support strong families and healthy development for children ages birth to 5.

We operate with the philosophy that...

Your child is never too young to be read to.
Books are best when they are shared with a caring adult.
And every child can benefit from being read to.

For more information on early childhood development, family activities, and other local and on-line resources, please visit our website: www.buildingconnectionseci.org.

Happy Reading!
**Tooth Tips**

**For Mom**

- It’s **extremely** important to tell the receptionist that you are pregnant when you make your dental appointment, and tell the dentist at the appointment. Certain procedures, like x-rays and pain medication, can harm your unborn child and certain times during your pregnancy are better than others to receive treatment. Leave extensive and cosmetic dental care for after your baby is born!
- Continue to see your dentist for regular cleanings and check ups. This will help get rid of the cavity-causing bacteria and keep teeth and gums healthy.
- Brush and floss your teeth three times a day, especially concentrating around the gum line.
- If you struggle with morning sickness, switch to a bland-tasting toothpaste and don’t try to brush when symptoms are at their worst. Rinsing with warm water or an antibacterial rinse can also help.
- Seek advice from your dentist or doctor if your gums are sore, swollen or bleeding. This is a sign of pregnancy gingivitis which can be an early sign of problems.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet. It’s important for your health and your baby’s.

**For Pregnant Women**

**For your Newborn**

- Starting at birth, gently wipe baby’s gums and tongue after each feeding with a moist washcloth.
- **Never** “clean” your baby’s pacifier with your own mouth. Bacteria that causes cavities can pass from your mouth to your baby’s. Rinse your baby’s pacifier with water or replace it with a clean one if it gets soiled.
- **Never** let your baby sleep with a bottle. Overtime, this can lead to “baby bottle rot” and middle ear problems.
- **Never** dip your baby’s pacifier in honey or other sugary substances. Sugar can lead to future tooth decay and honey contains a bacteria that makes young children sick.

---

**DID YOU KNOW . . .**

During pregnancy, your teeth and gums are more susceptible to cavity-causing bacteria, due to higher hormone levels. Higher bacteria levels can cause infections that can spread throughout your body and could lead to **preterm labor or other complications**!

It’s important to remember that what happens to your body affects your baby’s development, even their future teeth (which begin to develop around the third month of pregnancy)!

---

**MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE**

*a campaign for our youngest children*

**Early Childhood Dental Network**

For more information on children’s dental care or how to access dental care in west central Minnesota see our website: ecn.wclw.org
Tooth Tips for Infants and Toddlers

- After each feeding, gently wipe baby's gums and tongue with a moist baby washcloth or use an infant-size toothbrush, even before teeth erupt. Continue when teeth do appear.
- When your child is old enough to sit up, offer a cup for water or juice. Use only milk or formula in the bottle. Never offer juice or pop in bottles.
- Never let a baby or toddler sleep with a bottle filled with anything but plain water.
- Never dip or fill pacifiers with honey. The high sugar content of the honey contributes to tooth decay, and certain bacteria in the honey can make young children sick.
- Do not let toddlers sip all day on a bottle or sippy cup. Confine eating and drinking to meals and snack times. Constant sipping and snacking can lead to tooth decay.
- Around twelve months, wean from the bottle to a cup.
- Serve water instead of juice or pop.
- Check your child's mouth and teeth on a regular basis for signs of decay or other problems. Have them see a dentist by their first birthday. If a dentist is not available, encourage your doctor to look at your child's mouth.

DID YOU KNOW ...
Baby teeth are important for your child's overall health and development? Many parents do not worry much about their children's baby (primary) teeth because they think they are “just baby teeth” and will fall out anyway. Baby teeth have a purpose! They allow children to eat, speak properly, hold space for permanent teeth and guide the growth of the face. And dental problems can hurt!

For more information on children's dental care or how to access dental care in west central Minnesota see our website www.wclf.org/?ECDN
Tooth Tips for Preschoolers

- Serve a variety of nutritious foods at meals and set snack times, limiting sweets and sugary foods. Allowing children to “graze” all day leaves food on the teeth and, combined with bacteria, will attack the enamel (hard, outer white area of the tooth) causing cavities.

- If your child tends to be thirsty, offer water in a sippy cup. Providing milk and juice in a sippy cup can cause “baby bottle rot” by allowing liquids to pool around the front teeth, breaking down the enamel and causing cavities. Milk and juice are best served at meals with a “big kid cup.”

- Clean your child’s teeth at least twice a day with a small, soft toothbrush and a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste, especially before bedtime. If a brush and paste are not available, have your child rinse their mouth with water.

- Schedule a dental exam every six months. If a dentist is not available, ask your child’s doctor or nurse to check out your child’s teeth for signs of problems.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

Baby teeth are important for your child’s overall health and development? Many parents do not worry much about their children’s baby (primary) teeth because they think that they are “just baby teeth” and will fall out anyway. **Baby teeth have a purpose!** They allow children to eat, speak properly, hold space for permanent teeth and guide the growth of the face. And dental problems can hurt!

Make brushing fun by singing while brushing your child’s teeth! Here’s a suggestion:

**A-Brushing We Will Go (Tune: A-Hunting We Will Go)**
A-brushing we will go
A-brushing we will go
My smile goes up
My smile goes down
A-brushing we will go
A-brushing we will go
(Repeat several times to cover all teeth)

For more information on children’s dental care or how to access dental care in west central Minnesota see our website www.wcif.org/?ECDN

**ESD**
Early Childhood Dental Network

**MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE**
a campaign for our youngest children
Before you read:

Look through the pictures and think about:

- How many teeth the kids have.
- Who might be ready to lose a tooth.
- Why we might lose teeth and grow larger ones.

While you read:

Stop to ask:

- How many teeth do you have now?
- Do you remember when you didn’t have any teeth at all?
- What will it be like to have even more teeth?

After you read:

Think about the story and ask:

- Talk about why teeth fall out and grow back. Why do adults need more teeth?
- What kinds of foods are easier to eat with more teeth?
- Different teeth have different shapes – What might the different shapes do?

Activity to Try:

The children in the book came up with a verse at the end of the story. Make up your own rhyme about teeth and help your child write it down. It might be a reminder to brush their teeth or a description of what teeth help us with. This will allow your child to use their creativity and also practice rhyming.

Babies begin with no teeth at all – Soon, teeth will grow in and reach a total of 20! Read about what changes with teeth over a lifespan and how you can be ready to care for them at each stage.

Song to Sing –

"Wiggle-Jiggle Tooth"

sung to the tune of Old MacDonald

In my mouth I have some teeth
E I E I O
And in my mouth I put my brush
E I E I O
With a wiggle-jiggle here and a wiggle-jiggle there
Here a wiggle, there a jiggle
Everywhere a wiggle-jiggle
In my mouth I’ll keep my teeth
E I E I O

For more activities and parenting information, visit:
www.buildingconnectionseci.org
Read With Me Backpacks
Brought to you by Douglas County Building Connections

Before you read:
Look through the pictures and think about:
- What might be happening in the pictures.
- Who the main characters are.
- Why the teeth may have different facial expressions.

While you read:
Stop to ask:
- What facts do you already know? Which facts are new?
- What would you be like as a tooth?

After you read:
Think about the story and ask:
- What do you remember about teeth?
- What would you like to go back and learn more about?
- Talk about what you do to take care of your teeth.

Activity to Try:
Play pretend! Pretend to be teeth by dressing up in white and talking about how you like to be taken care of. Set up a “tooth care station” in the bathroom that includes toothbrushes, floss, toothpaste and cups so kids can practice good habits.

This colorful and educational book takes you through tooth school as you learn all about teeth. Test your understanding with the quiz at the end!

Song to Sing –
“Jingle Bells”
sung to the tune of Jingle Bells
I brush my teeth, I brush my teeth
Morning, noon, and night.
I brush them, floss them, rinse them clean.
I keep them nice and white.

For more activities and parenting information, visit: www.buildingconnectionsei.org
Read With Me Backpacks
Brought to you by Douglas County Building Connections

Before you read:
Look through the pictures and think about:
- What you might be practicing on each page.
- Why the animals might need to brush their teeth.

While you read:
Stop to ask:
- Have you brushed your teeth like this before?
- What other motions do you use to brush or floss your teeth?

After you read:
Think about the story and ask:
- Which was your favorite motion to make when brushing the animal teeth?
- What other animals might need to brush their teeth?
- Why might we need to brush in this way?

Activity to Try:
Use a piece of construction paper or tagboard and “paint” on it with toothpaste! Cover the whole surface with a bit of the paste and then rinse your brush and brush the paste away. This will help your child become comfortable using their brush and will also teach them about brushing the entire surface of each tooth.

This fun, pop-up book will help your kids practice the motions of brushing — up and down, back and forth, back teeth and every single tooth. End by “flossing” and examining your own teeth.

Song to Sing —
“A Toothbrush”
sung to the tune of Yankee Doodle

Of all the things around the town
A toothbrush is a dandy.
Brush up and down and all around
And stay away from candy!

For more activities and parenting information, visit: www.buildingconnectionseci.org
Before you read:
Look through the pictures and think about:

- What might be happening to Little Rabbit's tooth.
- What Little Rabbit might decide to do with her tooth.

While you read:
Stop to ask:

- Were your predictions correct?
- Talk about what it might be like to lose a tooth. Have you lost one before? Will you lose more?
- Which foods are your favorite to eat while your teeth are loose?

Read about Little Rabbit as she feels her tooth wiggle, become loose, and finally fall out. What to do with her tooth becomes the next question — Watch what she decides to do with her lost tooth!

Song to Sing —

"Brush, Brush, Brush Your Teeth" sung to the tune of Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Brush, brush, brush your teeth
At least two times a day.
Cleaning, cleaning, cleaning, cleaning,
Fighting tooth decay.

Floss, floss, floss your teeth
Gently around your gums.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Flossing can be fun.

Rinse, rinse, rinse your teeth.
Keep them clean and bright.
They'll be healthy, they'll be strong
If you treat them right.

For more activities and parenting information, visit: www.buildingconnectionseci.org
Before you read:
Look through the pictures and think about:

- What you see in the pictures.
- Find all the different kinds of teeth.
- Talk about what the teeth in the pictures might be used for.

While you read:
Stop to ask:

- Who has teeth like you do? Do they use them the same way?
- What other ways might teeth be helpful?

Learn about who has teeth, what they are used for and why we should take care of them in this colorful Dr. Seuss book.

Song to Sing –
"Get My Toothpaste, Get My Brush"
sung to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Get my toothpaste, get my brush.
I won't hurry, I won't rush.
Making sure my teeth are clean.
Front and back and in between.
When I brush for quite a while,
I will have a happy smile.

After you read:
Think about the story and ask:

- What would it be like if you didn’t have teeth? What foods would you miss eating?
- Name some of the healthy choices you are making for your teeth.
- Is there something you could do to improve your tooth care?

Activity to Try:
Recycle an empty egg carton by painting it with white paint. Use an old toothbrush as a paintbrush and be sure to cover all the cracks and cavities! When the “teeth” are dry, plant tissue paper or pom-pom “cavities” in the cracks and use your toothbrush to “brush” them away!

For more activities and parenting information, visit: www.buildingconnectionseci.org
Before you read:
Look through the pictures and think about:

- Which countries you might learn about.
- What you know about different tooth traditions.

While you read:
Stop to ask:

- Have you ever heard of these other tooth customs?
- Where might these traditions have come from?
- Which customs would you like to have as your own?

After you read:
Think about the story and ask:

- Which countries have similar tooth traditions? In what ways are they similar?
- Which countries have different tooth customs? In what ways are they different?

Activity to Try:
Choose one of the traditions you read about and carry it out the next time your child loses a tooth. Or, find a small rock or bean that looks like a tooth and pretend to carry out the ritual. Which one is your favorite? Draw a picture of your experience and share it with a friend.

Learn about tooth traditions all over the world and what children in other countries do with their loose teeth. You will be surprised at some of the similarities and differences between the customs. Then, find out about the parts of a tooth.

Song to Sing –

“Oh When My Teeth Come Marching In”
sung to the tune of On When the Saints Go Marching In

Oh when my teeth come marching in
Oh when my teeth come marching in
I’m gonna brush and floss and rinse
Oh when my teeth come marching in.

Oh when the plaque goes marching out
Oh when the plaque goes marching out
I’m going to sing, and laugh and be proud
Oh when the plaque goes marching out.

For more activities and parenting information, visit:
www.buildingconnectionseci.org
Title: *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World*

Author: Selby B. Beeler

Illustrator: G. Brian Karas

Publisher and Copyright Date: Houghton Mifflin, 1998

Connection to Minnesota: Minnesota author

Summary: This is a book about an experience shared by all: losing a tooth. It shares "tooth traditions" that have been collected from all over the world. The various traditions show how cultures are the same and how they are different.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10, all ages

Tips for Reading:
- Begin by reading the tooth traditions that match the ethnic backgrounds of the children in your group.
- Read traditions that are similar and some that are different to compare and contrast. Make guesses about why those traditions might be the same or not the same.
- Refer to the material at the back of the book about the parts of a tooth and the teeth in an adult mouth.

Questions before reading:
- What do you do when your baby teeth fall out? If your teeth haven’t fallen out yet, do you have a friend or an older brother or sister who has lost their baby teeth? What did they do?
- Does the tooth fairy visit your house?

To Introduce this story say: Let's look at a book that will show us that maybe the Tooth Fairy doesn't visit every country. Sometimes something different happens when someone loses a tooth...

Questions After Reading:
- Why do you think some children throw their teeth on the roof? Could you throw your tooth that high? Would you ask someone else to do it for you? Would you tie something to your tooth to make sure it went that high? What would you use?
- Would you like to try a tooth tradition from another country? Which one?
- Why do you think mice carry old teeth away in so many of the tooth traditions from around the world?
- If you moved here from another country, will you follow your country's tooth traditions or look for the Tooth Fairy .... or both?
RELATED ACTIVITIES

Art:
- Make a drawing of a tooth’s journey once it leaves your mouth. Where does your tooth go? And who takes it there?

Writing:
- Write a letter to the Tooth Fairy or Tooth Mouse or Tooth Blackbird that would explain what should happen to your tooth.
- Conduct a survey within your program. Ask both adults and children what they did with their baby teeth when they fell out. Include individuals who were born in a country outside of the USA.
- Write a letter to a child in another country, explaining your tooth tradition and asking what they do with the baby teeth that fall out of their mouths.

Suggestions for English Language Learners:
- Act out one or two tooth traditions after reading to show the children the meaning.
- Use a flannel board to depict what happens in different traditions.
- Have the children interview their family members about tooth traditions in their home country.
- Discuss the names for different teeth in different languages. What do those names mean? Is there a story behind the names? (e.g., canine teeth, eye teeth, wisdom teeth)

Related Books:
- **Open Wide: Tooth School Inside** by Laurie Keller (Henry Holt, 2003)
- **What Do the Fairies Do With All Those Teeth?** By Michael Luppens, illustrated by Phillipe Beha (Scholastic, 1991)
- **How Many Teeth?** by Paul Showers, illustrated by True Kelley (HarperCollins, 1984)
- **Tooth Fairy** by Audrey Wood (Childs Play, 1990)
- **Arthur’s Tooth** by Marc Brown (Little, Brown Children’s Books, 1985)
- **Nice Try, Tooth Fairy** by Mary W. Olson, illustrated by Katherine Tillotson (Simon & Schuster, 2000)