

## **BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES**

The mission of Southwest Seattle Oral Surgery is to improve community health by lessening the burden of dental disease in the community, spreading awareness of dental health practices, and by improving attitudes towards dental treatment by delivering treatment that minimizes anxiety and pain. Southwest Seattle Oral Surgery is to be a place of growth fostered by relations of mutual respect and trust.

Dr. Christie cares deeply that your child has a positive, confidence building experience. Making empowering decisions to positively impact your life, even when it takes some courage, is to be celebrated. Take the time to calm your nerves and demonstrate a confident and positive attitude for your child as they will read your body language and reflect your attitudes for good or bad. With this in mind please see the following behavior guidelines taken from studies in pediatric dentistry.

Parent Actions and Comments that Help Children Cooperate:

1. Calm, relaxed, and upbeat parent attitude and body language. Happy facial expressions.
2. Positive stories or comments about your own dental experiences.
3. Showing no doubt that your child will enjoy the dental visit and make you proud.
4. Parent stays silent when the dentist and staff are talking to the child and allows their child to answer questions from the dentist and staff.
5. Bringing something small that your child likes to the appointment (stuffed toy to hold, music and headphones).
6. Before- and after-appointment talk which directs the child's attention to something pleasant. (Talk about pets, toys, stories, food, movies, television, friends, child's plans or desires.)
7. Bring a joke or silly riddle to tell the dentist. (Laughing will relax everyone.)
8. Planning a small reward for your child after a successful appointment.
9. Take a picture of the smiling child after the appointment and send it to the grandparents.

Coping promoting behaviors:

- Non-procedural conversation with the patient which redirects their attention to something pleasant: Conversation about pets, toys, food, movies, television, friends. Conversation about the child's plans or desires. Familiar and well-loved stories.
- Prompt or command for the patient to use a coping strategy: "Use your deep breathing now." "Squeeze my hand as hard as you can."
- Humor directed to engage the patient and improve their mood: Silly jokes, such as "What is gray, weighs two tons, and puts people to sleep? A Hypnototamus!" Any statement that suggests outrageous ideas or emphasizes humorous aspects of a situation— although not at the patient's expense.
- Reframing and reinterpreting the situation, equipment and procedures: Presenting procedures and equipment as something fun, positive, manageable and understandable. "Let's play the astronaut game" is an example of reframing the presentation of an oxygen mask.

Parent Actions and Comments that Upset Children and Interfere with Cooperation:

1. Stressed, hurried, or anxious parent attitude or body language.
2. Negative or scary stories and comments about dental treatment or appointments.
3. Uninformative reassuring comments. ("Don't worry.")
4. Informative reassuring comments. ("You're almost done.")
5. Criticism. ("Why can't you be like your sister?")
6. Apology. ("I'm sorry this is taking so long.")
7. Empathy. ("You must be getting tired.")
8. Suggestions to the dentist. ("He does better when he knows what is going to happen.")
9. Intimidation. ("You are seriously going to harm yourself.")
10. Inappropriate or confusing comments. ("He's going to try to not hurt you.")

Distress promoting behaviors:

- Uninformative reassuring comments: "I won't let them hurt you." "Don't worry."
- Informative reassuring comments: "You're almost done." "Just two more minutes."
- Giving control to child (by parent): "Do you want to put this mask on?" "Can we start now?"
- Criticism: "You are in a bad mood today." "Why can't you be like your sister?"
- Apology: "I'm sorry this is taking so long." "I wish they didn't have to hurt you."
- Empathy: "I know it hurts." "You must be getting tired."
- Suggestions or demands to the healthcare provider: "He does better when he knows what is going to happen." "When she gets upset, if you'll stop for a moment, she'll calm down."
- Intimidation: "I'm going to slap you." "You are seriously going to harm yourself."
- Inappropriate or confusing comments: "You can do anything but move." "He's going to try to not hurt you."