

Dentist Role Play

Intent

To enhance children's understanding of oral health and community roles through meaningful and imaginative role play. By creating a dentist-themed area, including both a reception and clinical space, this will provide children with the opportunity to explore real-world experiences in a safe, age-appropriate setting. This type of play supports personal, social, and emotional development by encouraging children to take on roles, build confidence, and engage in conversations about oral health. It also promotes communication and language skills, as well as fine motor and self-care development. Introducing familiar dental tools and routines through play helps to make dental visits less daunting and encourage positive attitudes toward oral care.

Implementation

Set up a designated space in the setting into a role play dental surgery, including:

- A reception area with clipboards, appointment cards, name badges, phones, and patient lists
- A clinical area with a chair (perhaps slightly different to simulate a dental chair), small mirrors, gloves, masks, toothbrushes, and open-ended tools
- Posters or leaflets from a local dental practice to give authenticity and stimulate discussion

Contact a nearby dentist to request real-life materials such as brochures, mirrors, or child-friendly dental models. Model how to use the space during play, showing children how to take turns being the dentist, patient, or receptionist. Facilitate the discussion so children talk about brushing, healthy food choices, and visiting the dentist, extending vocabulary and reinforcing key oral health messages.

Chose equipment with safety and hygiene in mind. Follow your setting's hygiene policy, particularly if children use items such as toothbrushes or mouth-related props. Ensure items are cleaned or replaced as necessary to maintain high standards of cleanliness.

Impact

Children will gain a deeper understanding of the role of the dentist and the importance of looking after their teeth. Through imaginative play, they will build confidence in discussing oral health and will be more likely to express their thoughts and questions about brushing, dental visits, and healthy eating.

This role play activity can help reduce anxiety around real-life dental appointments and supports the development of empathy, cooperation, and turn-taking. The experience lays strong foundations for lifelong oral health awareness, reinforces the idea of people who help us, and strengthens both social and practical life skills.

Things you may need

- Posters
- Mirrors
- Toothbrushes
- Leaflets
- Mark making tools



Links to EYFS

- Communication and Language
- Understanding the World
- Physical Development
- Expressive Art and Design
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Characteristics of Effective Learning

- Creating and Thinking Critically
- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning

Find out more about oral health
www.supervisedtoothbrushing.com



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