# Tooth Brushing at the Table

**Group activity in circle**
- Sitting at a table in a circle, brush teeth as a group activity every day.
  - Ensure the table is washed and sanitized before brushing.
  - No need to wash and sanitize tables if tooth brushing is done directly following a meal or snack.

**You will need . . .**
- Give each child a small disposable cup, a small napkin, and a soft-bristled child-sized toothbrush.
  - Each toothbrush should be labeled with the child’s name.

**Apply . . .**
- Apply a small dab of fluoridated toothpaste on the inside rim of each cup. Have children use their toothbrushes to pick up the dabs of toothpaste.
  - Use a rice-sized amount of toothpaste for children under 3 years old and a pea-sized amount for over 3 years old.

**Brush together**
- Children and providers should brush together for about 2 minutes.
  - Some ideas for brushing include using a timer or singing a song.

**Set an example**
- Providers should brush their teeth with the children to set an example. Remind the children to brush teeth in front, back and both sides and the tongue.
  - See backside of this handout for details on “How to Brush”.

**Spit, wipe, throw**
- After 2 minutes, instruct children to spit any extra toothpaste into their cups, wipe their mouths, and throw the cups and napkins away.
  - Rinsing after spitting is not necessary.

**Gather toothbrushes**
- Children Should NOT rinse or put away their toothbrushes on their own.
  - Children should set down their toothbrushes for provider to pick up or directly hand to them.
  - Providers should wear gloves when handling children’s toothbrushes.

**Sanitize the holder**
- Sanitize the toothbrush holder before replacing toothbrushes.
  - Spray the holders with sanitizer, let them air dry for at least 2 minutes, replace the toothbrushes.

**Rinse each toothbrush**
- Providers rinse each toothbrush at the sink, one at a time.
  - Acquire water for rinsing brushes from a food prep sink.
  - Place each toothbrush into the holder, taking care to keep bristles from touching.

**Wash hands, sanitize**
- Children need to wash their hands after brushing.
  - Tables should also be washed, rinsed, and sanitized.
How to Brush

To get the most from your tooth brushing routine, follow these simple modeling guidelines.

Mouth models are a useful teaching tool. These models are great for formal instruction. However, provider modeling (actually doing the activity with the children) is the most effective approach for day-to-day practice.

1 USE
Use a soft bristle toothbrush and fluoridated toothpaste. (fluoride strengthens teeth)
- For children under 3 years old, use a rice-sized amount of toothpaste.
- For children over 3 years old, use a pea sized amount of toothpaste.

2 PLACE
Place the toothbrush where the gum meets the tooth, holding it at an angle.
- Food and germs tend to stick here.

3 MOVE
Move the toothbrush in small circles, in a pattern inside, outside, top & bottom.
- “Make tiny, tickly, wiggly circles” that cover every surface of every tooth.

4 COUNT
Count to 5 before moving the brush to another spot. Count out loud with them.
- This ensures that each tooth gets a good cleaning. It also helps reach the 2 minute mark.

5 REMEMBER
Remember to brush the biting surfaces & backsides. Brush all sides of teeth!
- Food and germs collect behind teeth and may easily be missed when brushing. Molars have bumps and grooves where food gets stuck and germs hide.

6 FINALLY
Finally, don’t forget to brush the tongue too.
- Get rid of the germs that like to hang out there.