

I Can Help With Tooth Brushing!: 16-36 Months

When your child first begins to use a toothbrush by himself he is:

- Showing you he wants to do things on his own
- Learning to take care of his body
- Learning to follow a routine

Ideas to try with your child:

- Brush your own teeth alongside your child. He may need a step stool to reach the sink.
- Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on his brush.
- Use a kitchen timer to make sure he brushes for 2 minutes.
- Let him try brushing first and then you can finish brushing his teeth completely. You will most likely need to at first!
- Getting in the habit of brushing is an important part of his routine, so make sure this happens daily.

If your child is struggling:

- It can be fun! Count each tooth as you brush it. (He may have 20 by the time he is 2!)
- Sing or hum a song as you brush.
- Give him choices. Let him pick the color toothbrush or the flavor of the toothpaste.

Going further:

- Read stories about toothbrushing such as [Caillou: I Can Brush Teeth](#) by Sarah Margaret Johnson; [Brush, Brush, Brush](#) by Alicia Padron; or [Have You Ever Seen A Moose Brush His Teeth?](#) by Jamie McClaine and April Goodman Willie.
- Some lively music about tooth brushing can be found on “Singable Songs for the Very Young” by Raffi.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 16-36 months** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Cooperate with tooth-brushing.” *Growing Up Healthy, Ages 16-36 months*, pg. 47