

# FUSSY BRUSHERS:

Tips for Even the Toughest Toddlers



“William, it’s time to brush your teeth.”  
“NO!”

Most parents can relate. It can be a battle of the wills to get toddlers to brush their teeth. Maybe they are in the middle of something and they don’t want to walk away.

Perhaps they’ve recently discovered that they can try to exert some control over situations and are pushing the limits. Whatever the case may be, you know this is a clash you must win. Teaching your children good brushing habits at a young age sets them up for proper oral hygiene as adults.

Studies show that a healthy mouth has a big impact on overall health—lowering risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes, to name a few.

**The biggest keys for parents: patience and persistence. Your child's teeth will appreciate the effort!**

## Success at the Sink

Some simple steps can help you win your child over when it’s time to brush teeth:

> **Model good brushing techniques.** Let your child sit next to you while you brush so he/she can see how it’s done. Be enthusiastic about it and encourage your child to “be like mommy or daddy.” Let him/her hold the toothbrush while you help—feeling independent and involved in brushing can go a long way.

> **Make it fun.** One idea is to sing “Happy Birthday” twice. This ensures your child brushes long enough and the familiar tune may help him/her concentrate. Or, create a silly tooth brushing song. It can help pass the time and start a routine your child can count on. Another option: do a countdown. Relate it to a rocket ship blasting off—once you reach “ONE,” your child can “blast” the toothbrush out of his/her mouth.

> **Stick it to them.** You may use sticker charts to reward good behavior. You can do the same with tooth brushing. One sticker in the morning, one sticker in the evening—after a certain amount, your child gets to go pick out a new toothbrush and toothpaste