



# Pointers For Parents

## Fall Back Into Healthy Habits

(NAPS)—Whether your family has been on its A-game when it comes to dental health or you were subject to the summer slide, the start of the school year is a great chance to reset. While your kids get used to the earlier wakeup call, incorporating oral health techniques along the way will help them beyond their first day.

Summer break doesn't usually include the same strict schedule as the school year and dental health can sometimes fall by the wayside. It's important to implement positive brushing and flossing habits with your kids as they start the school year off, for happy smiles in those class photos.

"The routine gets disrupted when summer happens," says Kim Trieu, DDS, a Delta Dental of Washington member dentist, who also teaches at the University of Washington School of Dentistry. "And when we get out of routines, we get out of habits."

### Helpful Hints

Daily reminders of brushing for two minutes twice a day and flossing at least once are a great place to start. This reduces the risk of cavities by removing food and plaque which build up with the increase in summertime snacks and treats. Before you leave the house in the morning and prior to bedtime, a quick "Did you brush yet?" can get the job done.

In addition to verbal reminders, try posting a visual reminder on the bathroom mirror such as a brushing and flossing chart or setting a daily phone alarm. Brushing and flossing charts are available at [www.toothfairy.deltadentalwa.com/blog/tooth-fairy-approved-brushing-and-flossing-chart](http://www.toothfairy.deltadentalwa.com/blog/tooth-fairy-approved-brushing-and-flossing-chart).

As well as getting your family to brush and floss consistently, check to make sure they're doing it thoroughly. Check for food or plaque on your kids' gum line. They can be evidence of miss-



**When updating your family's routine for the school year, make sure healthy brushing habits are on the to-do list.**

ing a spot while brushing and flossing and lead to unnecessary dental treatments due to lack of oral hygiene.

### Turn To The Tooth Fairy

If your kids need some extra encouragement, the Tooth Fairy is on the case. Parents can request a letter from the Tooth Fairy to motivate kids to be active participants in their dental health. Delta Dental of Washington has also partnered with the Tooth Fairy to offer helpful tips for parents too, including the downloadable "Caring for your Smile" home curriculum, the quarterly Grin & Grow e-newsletter, articles, activity sheets, videos and storybooks.

Launched in 2019 as part of Delta Dental's vision for a cavity-free Washington, *The Tooth Fairy Experience* ([www.TheToothFairyExperience.com](http://www.TheToothFairyExperience.com)) program aims to improve dental health habits at an early age, reduce the incidence of tooth decay, and increase the number of kids who regularly visit the dentist.

### Learn More

For further information on how to access the Tooth Fairy's materials, visit the parent resources page. For information about oral health in general, visit Delta Dental of Washington's blog at [www.DeltaDentalWA.com/blog](http://www.DeltaDentalWA.com/blog).