Tips for Providing Anticipatory Guidance

- **Respect** for the caregiver as an adult with knowledge, life experience, viewpoints and values

- Use **multiple learning methods** including discussion, pamphlets, demonstrations, and active participation (let the caregiver practice brushing the child’s teeth while you watch)

- **Ask** both open and closed ended questions. Examples would be “Have you started cleaning your child's teeth yet?” and “Can you think of a good way to work daily brushing with a fluoride toothpaste into your daily routine?”

- **Listen** to the caregiver and ask the caregiver for ideas about what he/she thinks might work on issues like weaning, daily brushing, and diet modification.

- Use culturally and linguistically **appropriate** methods of communication in working with patients of diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds and abilities when addressing their oral health needs and behaviors.

- If you remain **non-judgemental and friendly** towards both the child and the caregiver, they will be more likely to trust you and listen to your advice.

- **Small steps** involves choosing 1-2 changes that you want the family to focus on.

- **Positive reinforcement** lets the caregiver know that you are on their side. Keep in mind that health behavior change is a process, not a single event. It usually takes many triggers over time to change health behavior. Try not to get discouraged, but consider each counseling visit as getting one step closer to change.

*The most important tool you have is your own genuine concern and caring for the children and their families.*