

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.