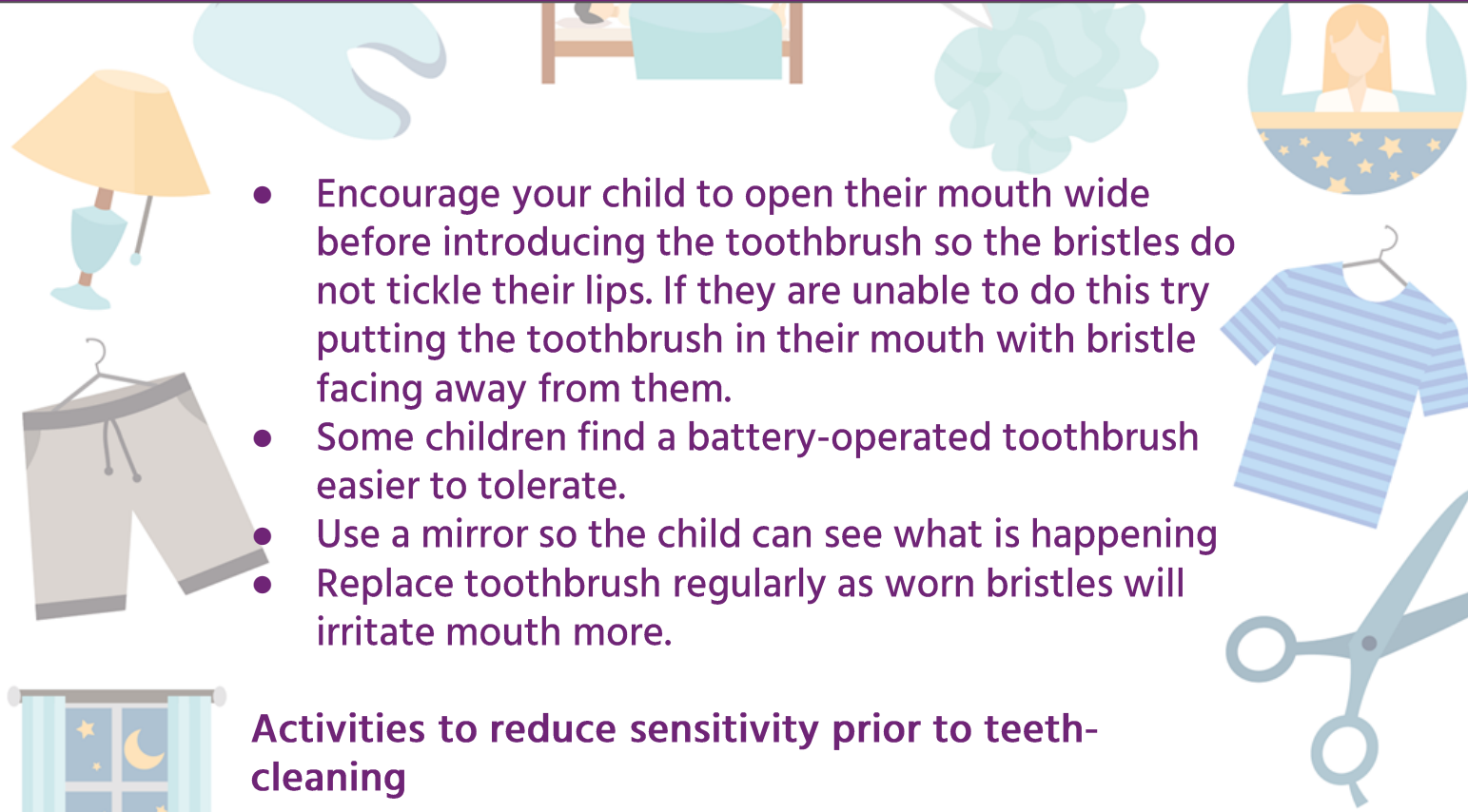


Advice on teeth cleaning :

- Try to work at your child's pace rather than 'pin them down' as this will increase anxiety and is less likely to be helpful in the long term.
- Doing resistive muscle activities (e.g. lifting, pushing, pulling tasks) prior to teeth cleaning can help to organise the sensory system as a whole so the child is not as sensitive.
- Mouths may be more sensitive if your child is tired. Think about the time of day the activity is carried out (better to clean teeth midday than not at all).
- Unflavoured toothpaste may be helpful for children who have a sensitivity to taste. Try 'Oranurse' unflavoured, non-foaming toothpaste. Available from www.dentocare.co.uk
- If your child is sensitive to the feel of toothpaste, use a tiny smear that the child is able to tolerate and very gradually increase the amount used over time.
- Try to keep other aspects of the routine familiar, predictable and the same (e.g. try to buy the same type of toothpaste when replacing) so child is not being over-loaded with other sensory information.
- Count down from 10 for the duration of the task.
- Some toothbrushes are designed to clean all surfaces of the teeth at the same time to reduce brushing time. Also consider a 'curved toothbrush' www.fledglings.org.uk or Dr Barman's Superbrush www.dentocare.co.uk.

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- Encourage your child to open their mouth wide before introducing the toothbrush so the bristles do not tickle their lips. If they are unable to do this try putting the toothbrush in their mouth with bristle facing away from them.
 - Some children find a battery-operated toothbrush easier to tolerate.
 - Use a mirror so the child can see what is happening
 - Replace toothbrush regularly as worn bristles will irritate mouth more.



Activities to reduce sensitivity prior to teeth-cleaning

- Chewing – using a chew tube.
- Press lips together and hold for count of 5.
- Make a fist and press firmly against mouth for count of 5.
- Press tongue firmly against roof of mouth and hold for count of 5.
- Use a firm wash-cloth and carry out a firm massage to lips and cheeks.



Sensory Occupational Therapy Service