Nursery topic

Toothbrushing Finger Rhyme: The Crocodile Who Won't Brush

A crocodile has eaten some cake and wants to go to bed without brushing his teeth. The children help him out.

Age
from about 3 years

Time
about 20 minutes with the finger rhyme and word cards; the puppet play alone takes about 5 minutes

Puppets
1 hand puppet with jaws that open and close; you play the second role yourself

Materials
a toothbrush just for the puppet, a closed tube of toothpaste, a cup, a towel, a small sand timer, a hand mirror

Puppet play

Read the script through once beforehand. It's fine to read from the page while you play.

Roles

Crumble
the crocodile (hand puppet)

You
in your own voice; you hold the toothbrush

Puppet: An animal hand puppet with jaws that open and close, for example a crocodile. A hippo, a lion or a dog works just as well; in that case, leave out the bit about the tongue.

Getting ready

Put the cup, toothbrush, tube, towel, sand timer and mirror on a tray. The crocodile sits on your hand with his jaws closed.

Tips for playing the roles

- ✓ When the crocodile speaks, open his jaws once for each syllable, not for every sound.

- Yawning: open the jaws slowly and as wide as they will go, tilting the head back a little.
- Brush dry, without toothpaste. Keep the cap on the tube so the puppet stays clean.
- You don't need to wait for the sand timer to run out. It is only there to show that brushing takes a little while.
- Each time a word appears in bold, show the object from the tray or turn over the matching word card.

Script

Stage directions are in italics. Words in **bold** are on the word cards.

The crocodile comes out, opens his jaws wide and gives a big, loud yawn.

Crumble: Aaaah! Night night, everyone. I'm off to bed now.

You: Hang on, Crumble! You had some cake earlier. What do we do before bed?

Let the children answer.

Crumble: Brush my teeth? Oh, no. I've got so many teeth, it'll take forever!

You: How many have you got, then?

Crumble: *(opens his jaws wide)* Count them!

Count a few teeth together, then stop: 'That's loads!'

You: Every single **tooth** gets a turn. That's what our **toothbrush** is for. And some **toothpaste**.

Crumble: Toothpaste? What does it taste like?

You: Nice and fresh. You only need a tiny bit.

You pretend to squeeze a little toothpaste onto the brush. The cap stays on the tube.

You: Open your **mouth** for me … oh. Do we even call it a mouth on you?

Crumble: Not on me! I've got jaws. Big snappy jaws! The children have got mouths.

You: *(brushing gently)* Top … bottom … and right at the back where the big teeth are.

Crumble: Hee hee hee, that tickles!

You: So we know how long to brush for, let's turn over the **sand timer**.

Turn the sand timer over. The children brush along with their index finger in front of their own mouths.

You: Children, who can stick out their **tongue**?

The children stick out their tongues.

Crumble: Not me. My tongue stays inside my jaws. That's how it is with crocodiles.

You: That's right. Now spit the froth into the **sink**.

Crumble: Ptooey!

The children pretend to spit.

You: We rinse the toothbrush with **water** under the **tap** and stand it in the **cup**. And here's the **towel**.

The crocodile dabs his jaws on the towel.

You: Have a look in the **mirror**!

Hold the hand mirror up in front of the crocodile.

Crumble: Oh! Who's that? What lovely clean teeth he's got! … Oh, it's me!

Crumble: *(yawns)* Now I can go to sleep. Night night! I'll brush again in the morning.

Move on to the finger rhyme 'Top and Bottom, Everywhere'.

Finger rhyme: "Top and Bottom, Everywhere"

You can say the rhyme quietly at the sink during real toothbrushing time. The children then brush with their own toothbrushes instead of their fingers.

1. **Brush it here and brush it there,**
   Your index finger is the toothbrush: brush in front of your mouth on the left, then on the right.

2. **top and bottom, everywhere.**
   Brush at the top, then at the bottom.

3. **Little circles, round we go,**
   Make little circles in front of your lips.

4. **front teeth shining in a row.**
   Give a big smile and circle back and forth in front of your teeth.

5. **Back where all the big ones sit,**
   Tap your cheek with a finger: that's where the big back teeth are.

6 **whizz your brush round every bit!**
'Brush' quickly back and forth.

7 **Spit it out, ptoo! Now we're done,**
Pretend to spit.

8 **blow your smile a kiss for fun!**
Make a mirror with both hands and blow a kiss into it.

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Word cards

The twelve words from the puppet play come as a printable A4 sheet: twelve cards with a picture and a word, ready to cut out. If you like, draw some more cards with the children.

toothbrush	**toothpaste**	**tooth**	**mouth**
tongue	**sand timer**	**sink**	**tap**
water	**cup**	**towel**	**mirror**

Notes for practitioners

1 The set works well at toothbrushing time after lunch, around a visit from your local oral health team, or as a way into a project about the bathroom.

2 The puppet's toothbrush belongs to the puppet and nobody else. Children brush their own teeth with their own toothbrush.

3 The set doesn't give toothpaste amounts or brushing techniques for different ages. For those, follow the advice of your local oral health team.

4 The 'mouth' and 'jaws' scene plays with words for different animals, which many children find exciting: we talk about a child's mouth, a crocodile's big snappy jaws, a dog's muzzle and a bird's beak.

5 Home languages: the children name the things in the bathroom in their home language and the crocodile repeats the words after them. You could hang the word cards above the sink as a picture strip.

Suitable puppets: Crocodile hand puppets at Daliono. Many puppets you already have will work just as well.

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toothbrush



toothpaste



tooth



mouth



tongue



sand timer



sink



tap



water



cup



towel



mirror

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PUPPET PLAY WORKSHOP

Brushing Teeth

Dear family,

At nursery we have been playing with our hand puppet, **Crumble (the crocodile)**. Our theme was **Brushing Teeth**. Along the way, we learnt these words:



Our words

 toothbrush	 toothpaste	 tooth	 mouth	 tongue	 sand timer
 sink	 tap	 water	 cup	 towel	 mirror

Our finger rhyme to join in with

1. Brush it here and brush it there,
2. top and bottom, everywhere.
3. Little circles, round we go,
4. front teeth shining in a row.
5. Back where all the big ones sit,
6. whizz your brush round every bit!
7. Spit it out, ptoo! Now we're done,
8. blow your smile a kiss for fun!

Ideas for home

- Ask your child which words they still remember, then say the same words in your language.
- Talk with your child in the language you know best.
- Do the finger rhyme together, in your language too if you like.

Best wishes from all of us at nursery

You can also find this letter, the rhyme and the words here:
www.daliono.de/puppet-play-workshop/brushing-teeth/

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