



PEARLY WHITES

ROLE-PLAY



Use the **Focus** Success Skill to clean your patient's teeth and look for cavities.



Career Cluster

Health



Success Skill

Focus



Estimated Activity Time

35–45 mins



Group Size

Individuals, pairs, or group

Materials

- Plastic sheet protectors or gallon-sized plastic bags (1 per child)
- Dry-erase markers (1 per group)
- **Cavities and Plaque** (projection or printout)
- **Alphabet Teeth Chart** (1 printout per child and educator)
- **Patient's Mouth** (1 handout per child)
- **Dental Hygienist Notes** (1 handout per child)
- Cotton swabs, paper towels, pipe cleaners, etc.
- White board or poster board paper

Prepare Ahead of Time

- Print materials.
- Place each **Patient's Mouth** handout in a plastic sheet protector or gallon-sized plastic bag.
- For the educator's **Alphabet Teeth Chart** copy, circle at least three teeth and their letters. These will be "cavities" that children will identify in the second part of this activity.

Focus Definition

Pay attention to something, even when distractions happen around you.

5 MIN: INTRODUCTION

1. **Say**, *"Have you ever been to the dentist? If you have, you have probably met a Dental Hygienist. A Dental Hygienist is a person who checks your teeth and gums to make sure they are healthy. They are usually the people you meet before the dentist comes in to check your teeth at the end of the appointment. Dental Hygienists clean your teeth using different tools to remove stains and scrape off the sticky and slimy stuff. Today you will get to be a Dental Hygienist!"*

*"To do their work, Dental Hygienists need to use Success Skills. Success Skills are important skills we all use in our life. **Focus** is a skill that is important as a child and as an adult. It's important to **Focus** when you're trying to hear what your friend is saying to you from across a loud room or when you're learning a new video game."*

*"Dental Hygienists use the **Focus** Success Skill when they take notes while a dentist is checking a person's teeth. For example, if the dentist sees a cavity, the dentist will let the Dental Hygienist know so they can write that in the patient's chart. The Dental Hygienist needs to make sure they **Focus** on what the dentist says to write the correct notes about which tooth has the cavity."*

25 MIN: ROLE-PLAY

2. Divide the large group into pairs.
3. Provide a dry-erase marker, **Patient's Mouth** handout (with a plastic sheet protector on it or placed in a gallon-sized plastic bag), and cotton swabs and pipe cleaners for each pair. Each child should have an **Alphabet Teeth Chart**.
4. Have the children use markers to "create" food and plaque on the teeth by coloring between the teeth on the **Patient's Mouth** image. While they are working, explain to children what plaque is. Project the **Cavities and Plaque** image or display a printout of it.

Say, *"Plaque is a sticky layer of germs and saliva (or spit) that sits on the teeth and gums. When plaque is left there for too long, it builds up and can cause problems like cavities and even tooth loss! A cavity is a hole in the tooth that gets bigger and bigger. When dentists find cavities, they fill the hole using special material called a filling."*

5. Once children have completed "creating" food and plaque on the teeth, have them switch their **Patient's Mouth** handout with a partner. Ask children not to do anything further with the handouts and wait for the rest of the instructions.
6. **Say**, *"We will pretend that this mouth handout is a new patient who has come into the dentist office. As the Dental Hygienist, you will be cleaning their teeth using the different "dentist tools" we have available. Dentists use special tools such as mirrors, polishers (a tool to polish teeth and make them shine), and dental floss to clean teeth."*

*"They use the **Focus** Success Skill to concentrate on cleaning each tooth, with the right tool, even when they are distracted by answering questions a patient may have or by other sounds in the dentist's office around them."*

7. Explain to children that Dental Hygienists **Focus** on one tooth at a time, making sure each one is cleaned before moving on to the next one. Ask children not to rush with the cleaning and take their time using their tools to clean the mouth tooth by tooth.
 - Cotton swabs can act as a “polisher.”
 - Pipe cleaners can act as “floss.”
8. Give children a few minutes to use different tools to “clean” the teeth.
9. Once children have cleaned the **Patient’s Mouth**, explain to children that the educator will act as the “dentist.”

Say, “Once Dental Hygienists have completed cleaning the teeth, they call over the dentist to look over their work and make sure the teeth were cleaned well. I will act as the dentist and look over the teeth you have cleaned.”

10. Ask children to hold up the **Patient’s Mouth** handout they have cleaned so the “dentist” can provide brief feedback. Here are some feedback examples:
 - *“It looks like each of you carefully cleaned each patient’s teeth to the best of your ability!”*
 - *“It looks like there’s a little bit of plaque left for you to clean. Keep going until they are all clean!”*
11. Collect the **Patient’s Mouth** handouts from children or have them set them aside. Have a brief conversation with children about how a dentist will also look for any cavities a patient may have.
12. Hand out an **Alphabet Teeth Chart** and a **Dental Hygienist Notes** handout to each child. Explain that each tooth has been assigned a letter.
13. Display the **Dental Hygienist Notes**. Explain to children that these are “notes” they keep for patients. Explain to children that you will call out a tooth, or letter, that has a “cavity.” They must circle the tooth, or letter, that has a “cavity” on the **Dental Hygienist Notes** by referring to the **Alphabet Teeth Chart** to correctly identify the tooth.
14. *Say, “Dentists let Dental Hygienists know which tooth has a cavity. The Dental Hygienist uses the **Focus Success Skill** to record it, or take notes on which tooth it is, so they can save that information. Let’s practice recording which teeth have cavities. I will tell you what I’m observing about the patient’s mouth, including which teeth have cavities, and you must circle the cavities on the **Dental Hygienist Notes** using the **Alphabet Teeth Chart**. You will need to **Focus** to make sure you are able to find the correct tooth using the two handouts.”*
15. If needed, review an example before identifying the teeth with cavities. Have children point out the tooth using their finger.

*Ask, “For example, if I said the A tooth has a cavity, which tooth on the **Dental Hygienist Notes** would it be?”*

16. Using the educator's copy of the **Alphabet Teeth Chart** with some of the teeth circled, call the cavities out loud, one-by-one, giving children a minute to look at the **Alphabet Teeth Chart** and then circle the cavities on the **Dental Hygienist Notes**.

- *The M tooth has a cavity.*
- *The T tooth has a cavity.*
- *The Q tooth has a cavity.*

Note: For groups who are not familiar with the alphabet, write down the letter on a blank sheet of paper or on a whiteboard.

17. After each cavity is called out loud, have a brief conversation about what helped them **Focus** to record the tooth that has a cavity.
18. (Optional) For an added challenge, name two teeth and cavities at the same time or name a tooth with "plaque" as a distraction. Children will need to use the **Focus Success Skill** to make sure they are able to name only the teeth with cavities.
19. Have children take a minute to complete the second part of the **Dental Hygienist Notes** handout. Describe each clip art option on the **Dental Hygienist Notes**. Ask children to circle the options they think would help a patient take care of their teeth. Explain that Dental Hygienists often give recommendations to patients about how to take care of their teeth at home.

5 MIN: REFLECTION

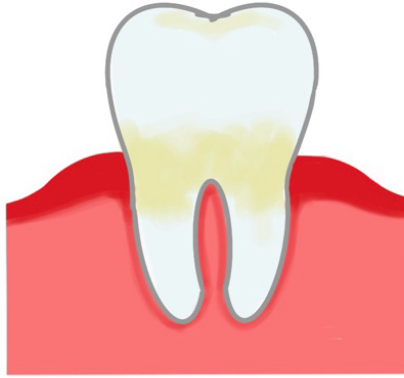
20. Have a brief discussion with children about the activity.

Ask:

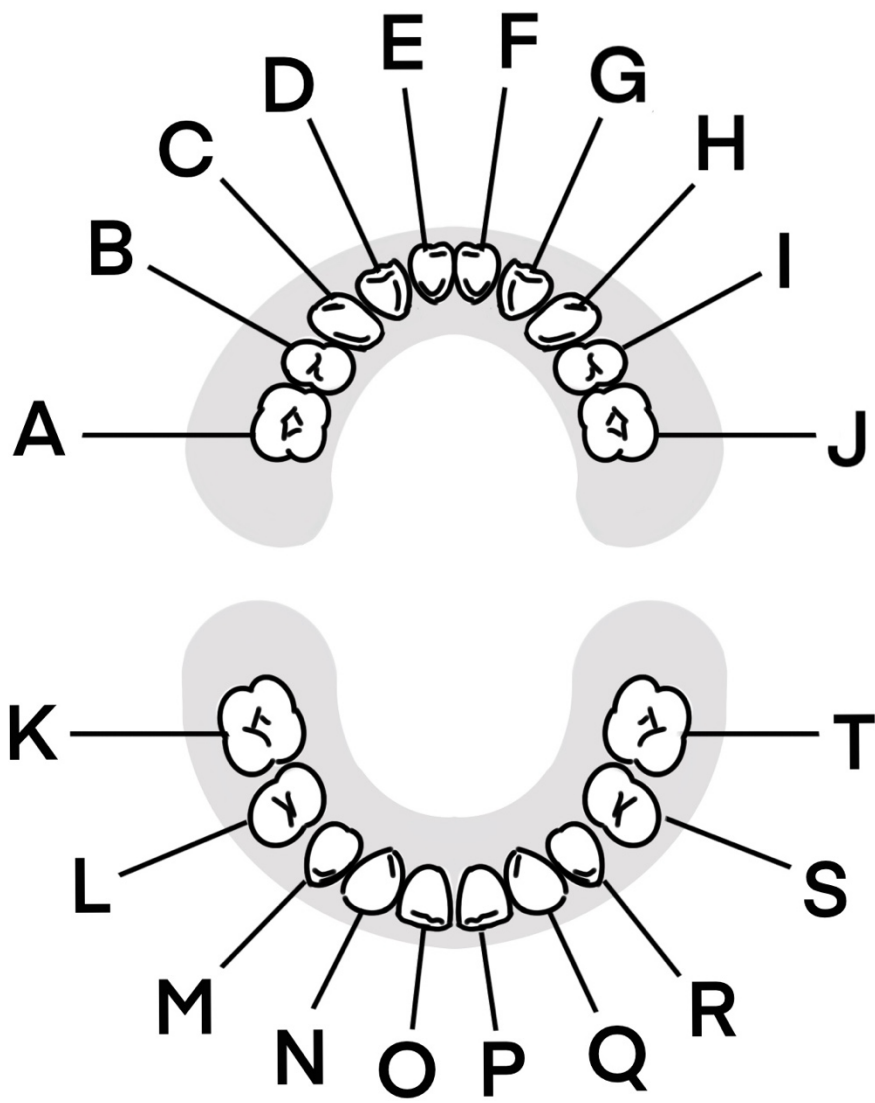
- *"What Success Skill did you use today?"*
- *"Why is it important for a Dental Hygienist to **Focus**?"*
- *"It's important to **Focus** in a lot of careers. What is another career that also uses the **Focus Success Skill**?"*



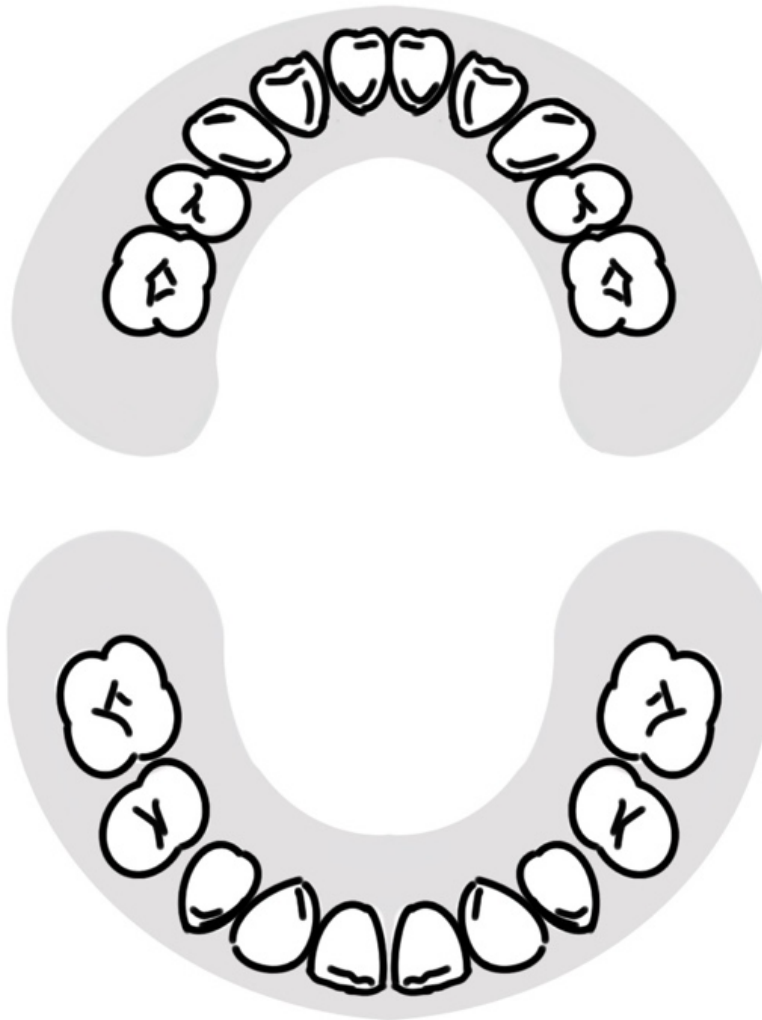
CAVITIES AND PLAQUE



ALPHABET TEETH CHART



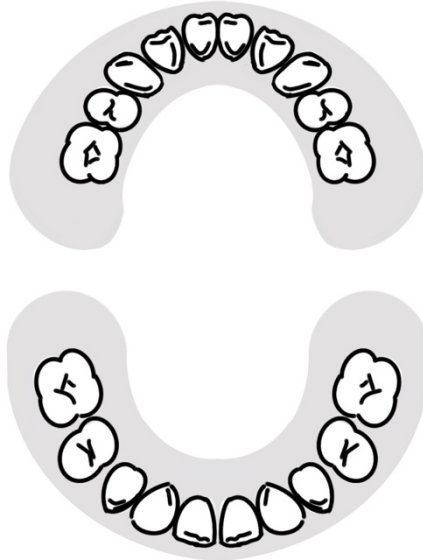
PATIENT'S MOUTH



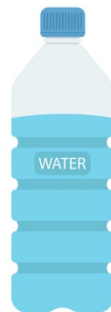
DENTAL HYGIENIST NOTES

Name _____

Circle the cavities.



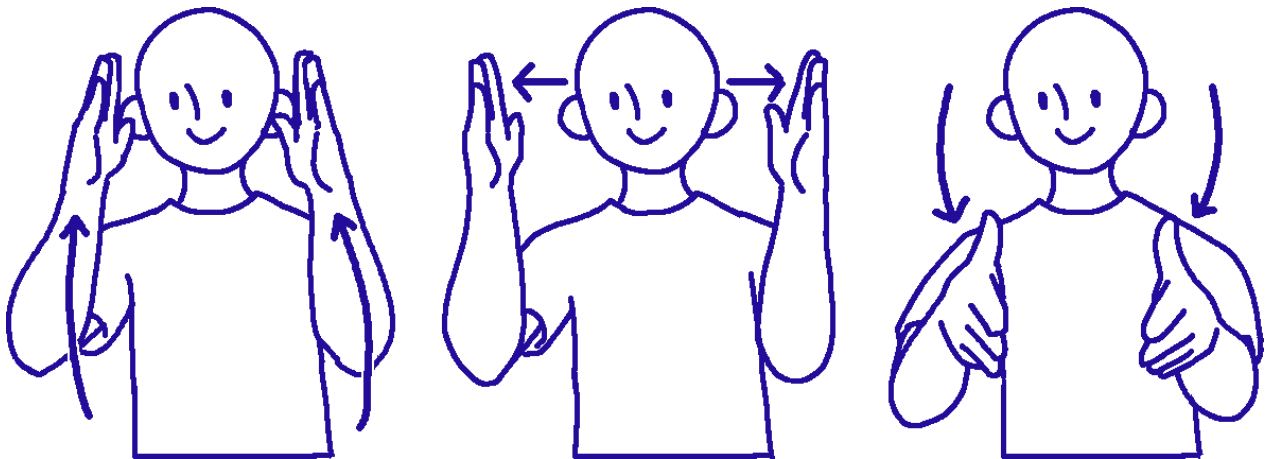
Circle what you recommend the patient do to take care of their teeth.



FOCUS ASL SIGN



To help children learn the Success Skill, use the ASL sign each time you say “Focus.”



1. Bring both hands up to your face with the palms facing each other. Keep your hands flat with the fingers pointed upward.
2. Move your hands outward, still facing each other, toward your shoulders.
3. Then bring your hands forward, with the fingertips pointing away from you, gradually moving them closer together but not touching.

