



**FIG 11-7** The most effective cleaning of teeth is done by parents.

Use one hand to cup the chin and one to brush the teeth. For easier access to back teeth, hold the mouth partially open. After brushing with a fluoridated paste or gel, avoid rinsing the mouth to maximize the beneficial effects of the fluoride.

### Nursing Tip

- To encourage children to open their mouths, ask them to “tweet like a bird” or to say “cheese” to brush the front teeth, and to “roar like a lion” to brush the back teeth.
- Sing, tell stories, or talk to children during teeth cleaning to prevent boredom.

For effective cleaning, a small toothbrush with soft, rounded, multi-tufted nylon bristles that are short and uniform in length is recommended. Nylon bristles dry more rapidly after use and retain their shape better than natural bristles. Toothbrushes are replaced as soon as the bristles are frayed or bent. With young children, brushing may be more easily accomplished using only water