Getting down with the kids

Denplan dentists around the country are reaching out to their local communities to engage with families and encourage good oral health in children of all ages.

While some parents have had uncomfortable experiences of the dentist in their own childhoods, others simply don’t realise the importance of early years dental healthcare. The Child Dental Health Survey of 2013 reported that nearly a third (31 per cent) of five year olds and nearly a half (46 per cent) of eight year olds had obvious decay experience in their primary teeth¹.

Whether or not the parents themselves are patients at your practice, inviting local families to attend an open day is a great way to encourage early attendance and to disprove the belief that dental visits are to be dreaded or feared. The earlier a child is familiarised with the dental practice and dental check-ups, the more chance of regular attendance and good oral health for the long term.

Visiting nurseries and primary schools is another great way to get the message across, both directly to the children and also to their parents. Our three highlighted Denplan practices have all received excellent feedback from their efforts to improve children’s oral health in their area.

Denuvo Dental

Janet and Jonathan Hill’s practice, Denuvo Dental, has only recently celebrated its one year anniversary, however the team has regularly been out and about in their community near Bolton promoting Denplan campaigns and meeting local nursery and school-age children.

Dental nurse, Theresa Wright, is also the practice’s Oral Health Educator and is in charge of co-ordinating Oral Hygiene Workshops that she and her colleague, Katie Ward, Denplan Champion, thoroughly enjoy presenting.

“We’ve visited no fewer than six nurseries in the last few months,” smiles Theresa. “We take along goody bags with toothbrushes and toothpaste, crayons, colouring books and stickers and we teach the children how to brush their teeth properly. We play games to help them remember what to do and hold little quizzes to see who’s paid the most attention. The children love it and have sent us some very sweet thank you letters. We’re planning to visit some of our local primary schools in the near future to extend the message further.”

The team has found Denplan promotions such as the Big Summer Brush-Up campaign provide useful platforms from which to launch their own local marketing and health education campaigns and they always ensure they include any current campaign messages on their website.

While some dental websites concentrate on adult patients alone, Denuvo has gone to great lengths to include children of all ages, promoting Denplan
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the dentist. "We want to avoid an uncomfortable, scary first encounter at all costs," says Liam. "That’s why bringing children in to see us from a very young age is crucial and putting both the children and the parents at ease helps us to give them the best possible start in looking after their oral health."

In March, the practice held its first ‘Kids’ Healthy Teeth’ morning, inviting both registered and non-registered local residents to call in and see what they have to offer. It was a fun and entertaining family event, including staff dressed as popular children’s characters, a balloon artist, Tooth Fairy face painter and puppet demonstrations. A small cinema screen played dental related episodes of much-loved children’s TV shows, including ‘Peppa Pig: The Dentist’ and ‘Horrid Henry Tricks the Tooth Fairy’ for the younger children while older kids enjoyed experiments and displays demonstrating the amount of sugar contained in various foods.

“We gave out welcome packs that included a letter addressed directly to the child,” recalls Liam. “The idea was to involve them in their own oral healthcare from the very beginning. The day was such a success and such an enjoyable experience for all of us that we’ve decided to make it an annual event.”

If you’re thinking of holding an event to attract families to your practice, Denplan can offer lots of advice and practical help to ensure the day is a success. Call your Denplan Consultant or the Denplan Practice Marketing Team to discuss your ideas and aims.

Reference

Top tips for kids’ open days

- Invite ideas and contributions from your whole team
- Call your Denplan Consultant or the Denplan Practice Marketing Team for extra help and advice
- Advertise your event through the local press, flyers, parish newsletters and schools and nurseries
- Use social media to spread the word online
- Put together useful goody bags and details about your practice
- Be creative and delegate tasks to your team members so the whole team is involved
- Take photos of the event and post them on your website or on your social media channels afterwards
- Invite the local press to attend to increase the publicity you create
- Discuss the event with your team afterwards and record any feedback for next time
- Monitor any increase in patient numbers as a result of your event