



COordinated Oral Health Promotion (CO-OP) Chicago

Community Health Worker Games for Oral Health Education



These games were created by community health workers with Coordinated Oral Health Promotion (CO-OP) Chicago, in the Department of Pediatrics and the Institute for Health Research and Policy of the University of Illinois at Chicago. This work was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research of the National Institutes of Health (Grant No. UH3DE025483). Feel free to use, share, and modify these games as you like, but please give credit to CO-OP Chicago and funding agency when appropriate.

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<http://go.uic.edu/COOPChicago>



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BABY SHARK

- ❖ Note that this activity is intended for children under 3 years old.
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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach tooth brushing.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent will be able to demonstrate how to brush the child's teeth
- Child will be able to demonstrate how to brush the his or her own teeth
- Parent will be able to support the child to brush his or her own teeth

Materials:

- Shark: Consider "Finn the Shark Dental Puppet" available on Amazon. This puppet has actual teeth with spacing.
- Age appropriate tooth brush
- Age appropriate tooth paste (child tooth paste with fluoride)
- Floss (toothpick floss in fun child shapes)



Implementation:

Step 1: CHW holds Baby Shark

Step 2: CHW holds tooth brush and pretends putting toothpaste on the tooth brush. Describe the proper amount of toothpaste to use. (Be careful about giving the tooth brush to the child because they will want to put it in their own mouths and then in the baby shark's mouth. This could spread germs since the baby shark is reused.)

Step 3: CHW demonstrates brushing for the child and parent. Brush in a circular motion all around the mouth. Then put tooth brush down.

Step 4: CHW demonstrates how to floss teeth on Baby Shark. While demonstrating, talk about the benefits of flossing:

- Floss removes food, plaque and fights bad breath
- Prevents tooth decay and gum disease
- Floss can be fruit flavored and have fluoride on it which is a good thing. (This can lead to a discussion about fluoride.)

Step 5: Let the parent demonstrate the brushing process as well. Then let the child demonstrate. (Again, be careful not to let the child put the tooth brush into his or her own mouth. Or if they do, do not allow them to then brush the baby shark's teeth with equipment they put in their mouths.)

HEALTHY DIET, HEALTHY TEETH

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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach about healthy foods.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent will be able to identify food items that contribute to a healthy and balanced diet
- Parent will be able to identify foods that contribute to healthy dental care
- Child will be able to name 1-3 healthy foods

Materials:

At least two wood food sets (featuring healthy foods) with a balance. These can be purchased through a variety of retailers.



Implementation:

Step 1: CHW takes out one set. Set up the balancer and lay the food out.

Step 2: CHW asks child to place a food item they like or that they knew about on the balancer one at a time. This provides an opportunity to identify new foods to try.

Step 3: Each balance will eventually have one more item and the balance will become imbalanced. Depending on the food choice, it is how it will become imbalanced and it is a way to show children a healthy and balanced diet. This is an opportunity to talk about the fact that fruit also has sugar in it and has to be “balanced”.

Step 4: Explain to child how a healthy balanced diet will also keep teeth strong and healthy

Step 5: Make a plan to try new foods!

Disclaimer: An adult must supervise children at all times when teaching/playing with food balancer.

HEALTHY FOOD

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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach about healthy foods and promote conversation and social skills.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent will learn about healthy foods and gain awareness of healthy eating habits
- Child will learn about health foods

Materials:

Food Themed Image Matching Puzzles (puzzles with 2 pieces, available on Amazon and other similar vendors)



Implementation:

Step 1: CHW takes out six cards. Choose cards that have healthy foods (fruits, vegetables, proteins.) Separate them.

Version 1 (for older or more advanced children): Turn them face down. Mix them up.

Version 2: Leave them face up. Mix them up.

Step 2:

Version 1: Instruct the child to turn over or pick up one-half of a card facing down and turn over another half, trying to identify if it completes the full card. If it doesn't, then the child can turn over another card. Continue until the match is found. (In older children, only two cards can be turned over at a time. This is a great memory exercise but is often too advanced for this age group.)

Version 2: Instruct the child to pick up one-half of a card and then find the matching half.

Step 3: When a match is found, the CHW will ask the child if they know what that food is. If not, the CHW will tell the child. Or the parent can tell the child.

Step 4: The CHW will ask the child whether or not he/she has tried it at home. If the child has tried, the CHW will ask if he/she liked it or not. The conversation about the food (what it tastes like, fun facts about the food, etc) can continue depending on interest.

Step 5: Attempt to complete three sets of cards with three items to name. Once that is done, the CHW can take out more cards if the child is interested.

Older children who know more food names can play with more than three sets of cards. Another modification that can be used for older children is to separate the foods into "Go, Slow, Whoa" foods.

HEALTHY TOOTH FACTORY PUZZLE

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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach the components of healthy dental habits.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent and child will be able to identify the components of healthy dental habits (brushing, flossing, fluoride toothpaste, healthy foods)

Materials:

- Healthy Tooth Factory Dental Peg Puzzle (Six piece puzzle available on Amazon)
- Child's toothbrush, floss, toothpaste, and mouthwash



Implementation:

Step 1: CHW takes all the pieces out of the puzzle and lays them next to it.

Step 2: CHW encourages the child to put the puzzle pieces in place. As they do, ask the child or parent about each piece.

- "What are these foods?" "Are these healthy foods?" "Do you drink milk?" "Do you eat apples?"
- "What is that?" (a toothbrush, teeth, dental floss, etc)
- "What are the teeth doing?" (brushing, flossing, etc), "Why?"

Step 3: CHW shows the child an actual toothbrush, floss and toothpaste. Let the child touch and play with them.

CHOOSE THE BEST SNACKS PUZZLE

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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach about healthy foods and promote conversation and social skills.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent and child will learn about healthy foods and gain awareness of healthy eating habits
- Parent will learn how to communicate with the child about food

Materials:

- Food Themed Image Matching Puzzles (puzzles with 2 pieces, available on Amazon and other similar vendors)
- Supplementary educational materials focused on nutrition, tooth brushing and fluoride (to be individually tailored according to family need)
- These tips for the CHW can help conversation:
https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/DGA_Conversation-Starters.pdf



Implementation:

Step 1: CHW provides general nutrition education to parent.

Step 2: CHW takes out the cards. Mix the puzzle pieces face up on the floor or coffee table.



Step 3: Help the child to find the matching piece to each food item.



Step 4: Discuss with the parent the following:

- What foods assist clean the teeth while consuming them?
- What food are the most acidic for the teeth?
- Which food should we consume once in a while? ("Go, Slow, Whoa" foods)

You may add more questions as needed.

Step 5: Strategize with the parent ways of implementing more healthy meals and habits to their routine.

Step 6: Provide resources that match the family's needs.

GREEDY GRANNY

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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach about frequent and healthy snacking.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent and child will learn how much snacking is acceptable.

Materials Needed:

- Greedy Granny Game (available for purchase at Target)
- Supplementary educational materials focused on nutrition, tooth brushing and fluoride (to be individually tailored according to family need)
- Nutrition hand outs: consider ones that show "My plate" and discusses ways to reduce sweets
 - https://choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tentips/DGTipsheet13CutBackOnSweetTreats_0.pdf
 - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate-message-toolkit/make-small-changes>

Implementation:

Step 1: CHW tells the Greedy Granny story

The Greedy Granny likes to have more than 3 snacks in between her meals when she's only supposed to have two a day. The Greedy Granny likes to eat lots of chips, cookies, pretzels, gummies, juice, soda and donuts all day long. The Greedy Granny knows this is not a good behavior because she's losing all of her teeth. We need to help the Greedy Granny by taking all of the bad snacks away. Since the Greedy Granny gets so grumpy, we need to take the snacks while she's sleeping without waking her up.

Step 2: CHW sets up the Greedy Granny to sleep by setting her back on the recliner with the partial dentures in the mouth.



Step 3: CHW places three of each of the snacks on the tray. There should be 3 red thin rectangular cookies, 3 dark yellow pretzels, 3 blue round cookies and 3 bright yellow wide rectangular cookies.



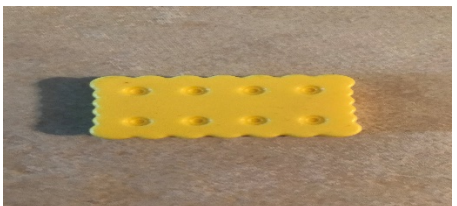
3 red thin rectangular cookies



3 dark yellow pretzels



3 blue round cookies



3 bright yellow wide rectangular cookies






Step 4: CHW places the wheel where all can reach, so that the players can take turns spinning the arrow. The youngest person in the group will spin the wheel first; the turns go by age meaning the oldest person would go last.

Note: The rules of this game have been tailored for the purpose of teaching that the constant consumption of snacks can cause cavities. Therefore we won't be placing any snacks back on the tray for the Greedy Granny. If someone lands on a purple space, treat it the same as a green space.



Step 5: Ask the youngest player to spin the arrow on the wheel (demonstrate if needed).

- If the arrow landed on the 3X, the player must take one snack off the tray. Then the player has to push the button on the side of the tray 3 times and hope the Greedy Granny does not wake up. (If a player lands on 2X, he or she must push the button 2 times. If the player lands on 1X, he or she must push the button once.)
- If a player lands on the red crossed circle, then he or she loses a turn. 
- If a player lands on the sad/happy face, the player can take a snack from another play and can skip pressing the button on the side of the tray.  

Each turn, players should choose a different snack in order to collect them all. The person that has collected all four different color snacks wins the game. Or whoever has the most of the different snacks when Granny's teeth pop out is the winner!



Step 6: Ask the family how many snacks they consume a day and strategize ways of reducing the amount of consumption if they are having more than three snacks in between meals.

Step 7: Provide resources that match the family's needs.

HAPPY/SAD TOOTH ACTIVITY

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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach about healthy and unhealthy foods and the impact of health and unhealthy foods on teeth.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent and child will learn about health and unhealthy foods.
- Parent and child will learn the impact of health and unhealthy foods on tooth health.

Materials Needed:

- Child safe scissors
- Glue sticks
- Print in color the happy/sad tooth sheets printed in color
- Nutrition, tooth brushing and fluoride oral health education
- Nutrition hand outs: consider ones that show "My plate" and discusses ways to reduce sweets
 - https://choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tentips/DGTipsheet13CutBackOnSweetTreats_0.pdf
 - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate-message-toolkit/make-small-changes>

Implementation:

Step 1: CHW provides the nutrition oral health intervention. Make sure the parent and child understand or have an idea of what is healthy and unhealthy for their teeth.

Step 2: Give child safe scissors to the parent and encourage the parent to help the child cut out the happy and sad tooth pictures. (Cut on the dashed lines.)

Step 3: Give child safe scissors to the parent and encourage the parent to help the child cut out the healthy and unhealthy food choice pictures. (Cut on the dashed lines.)

Step 4: Put the child safe scissors away to reduce distractions. Give the parent a glue stick and tell the parent to help the child glue the healthy/unhealthy foods to the corresponding tooth. While they are doing this, the CHW can ask about different foods and if they are healthy or

unhealthy, and if that causes a health or unhealthy tooth. For example, are carrots an unhealthy or a healthy food? Which tooth do they match with?

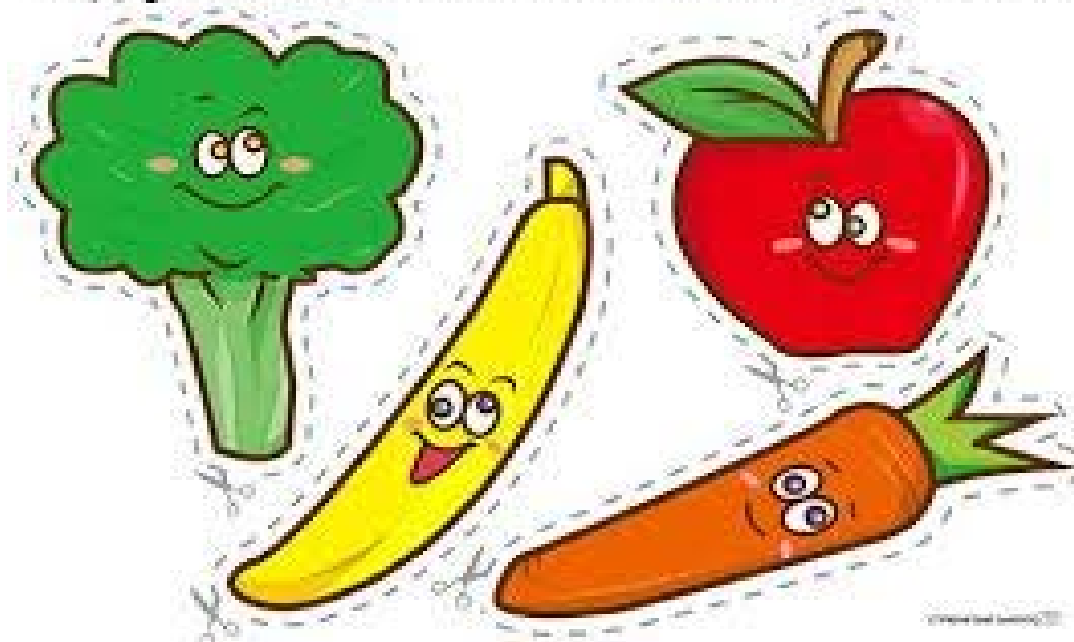
Step 5: Have the child magnet the happy and unhealthy tooth to the refrigerator as a reminder to choose healthy foods and steer away from the unhealthy foods.

Step 7: Strategize with the parent and the child ways to reduce unhealthy foods in the home.

Step 8: Provide nutrition handout

Happy Tooth. Sad Tooth

Cut out, laminate, and play with your students.



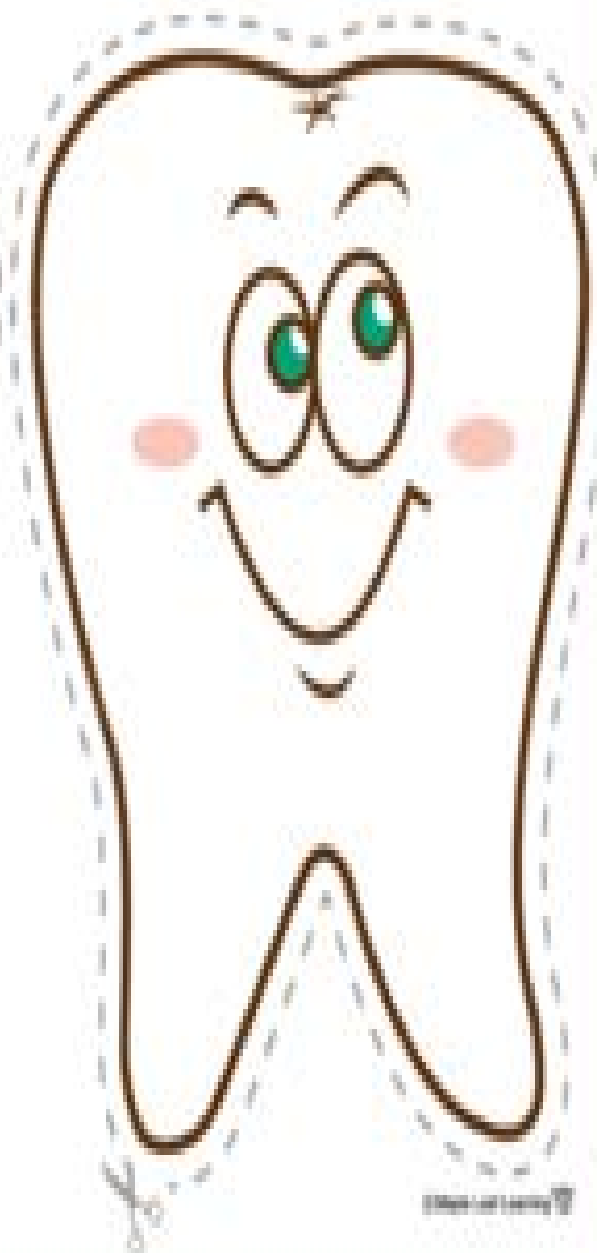
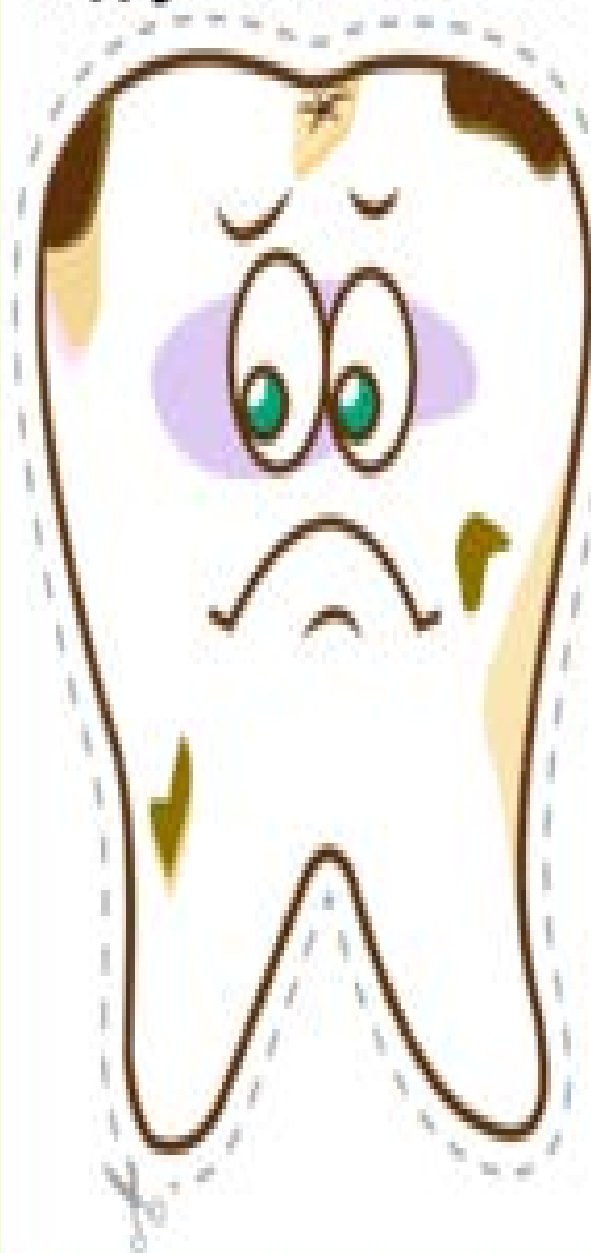
Happy Tooth. Sad Tooth

Cut out, laminate, and play with your students.



Happy Tooth. Sad Tooth

Cut out, laminate, and play with your students.



MAKE YOUR OWN TOOTH MODEL

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Purpose: The goal of this exercise is to teach the types of teeth children have, how many they have, and how they erupt.

Learning Objectives:

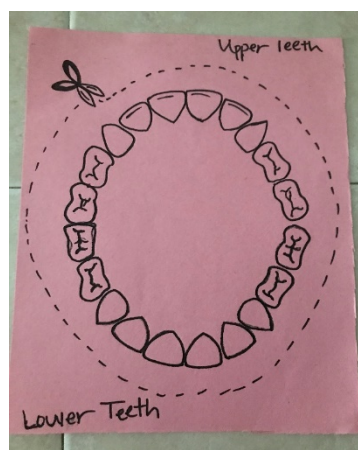
- The parent will learn how many teeth children have.
- The parent will learn the types of teeth.
- The parent will learn about tooth eruption and normal tooth loss (shedding) of primary teeth in children.

Materials Needed:

- Child craft construction paper in light pink (for the gums)
- Child craft construction paper in red (for the tongue)
- 1 black or dark Sharpie pen
- A pack of 1" white pom poms or cotton balls (Pom poms are a craft product and work a little better than cotton balls.)
- Liquid glue, like a white Elmer's glue
- Child safe scissors
- Tooth and tongue outlines that can be transferred to construction paper (template at end of this document)
- Supplementary educational materials focused on nutrition, tooth brushing and fluoride (to be individually tailored according to family need)

Implementation:

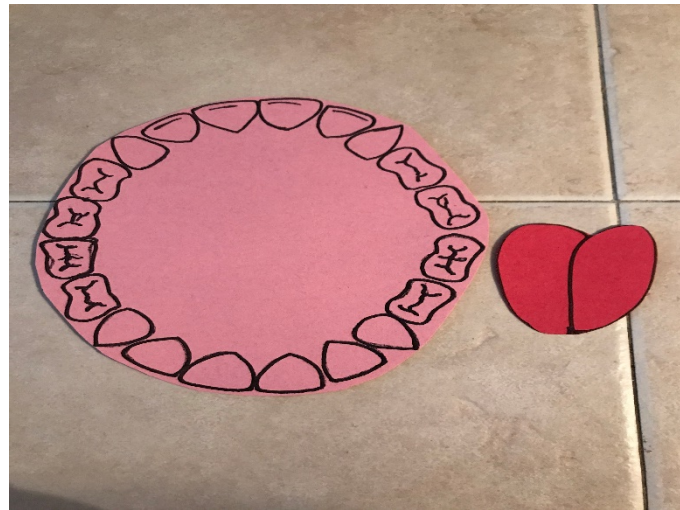
Step 1: Before going to the visit, the CHW should transfer or outline the tooth and tongue outlines onto the construction paper using the sharpie pen. This can be done free hand, by photo copying, or by printer. You might have to cut the construction paper to fit a normal printer if you try to do it that way. See the template at the end of this exercise for an outline.



Step 2: CHW provides general oral health education (page 3 of the Pediatric Guide to Children's Oral Health), explaining the difference between primary teeth and permanent teeth.

Step 3: Allow the parent to look at the educational flip chart or documents. Consider giving them the picture or flip chart to hold while talking. Talk about when the child's teeth should be erupting and naturally falling out (shedding). Talk about what teeth the parent has noticed have erupted in their child's mouth.

Step 4: The CHW (or parent) then cuts around the traced tooth model and the tongue with the child safe scissors.



Step 5: The CHW folds the tooth model in half and glues the tongue to the bottom part of the mouth. Make sure you remember where the top is! (It is where the incisors have the extra line.)



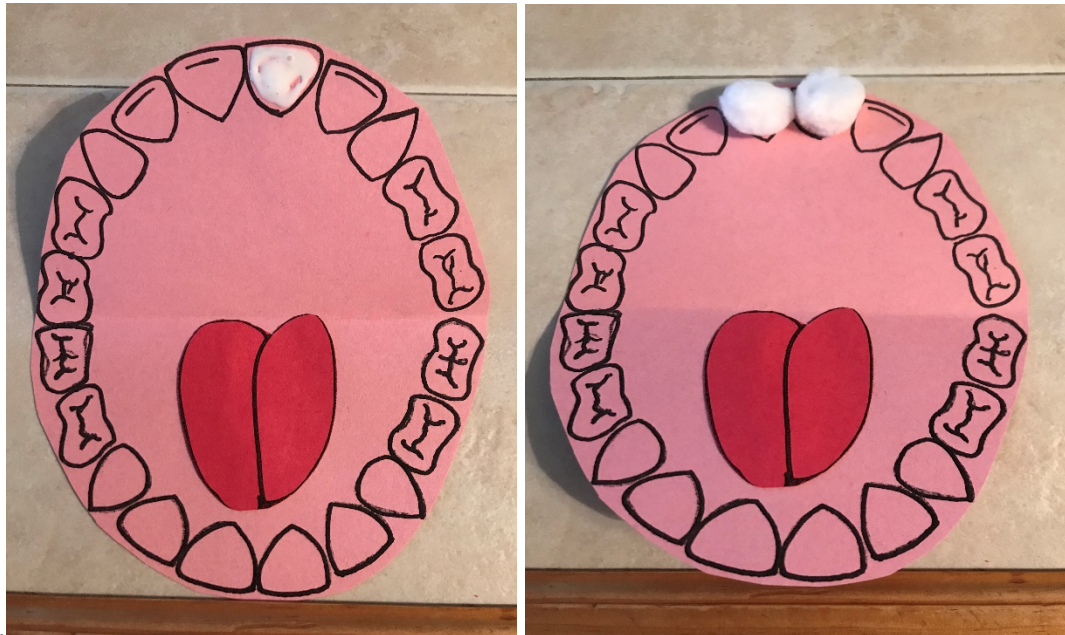
Step 6: Throw away the cut off paper and put the scissors away to limit distractions.

VERY IMPORTANT STEP WHEN WORKING WITH KIDS!

Step 7: Give all the children present a few pom poms to play with. You only need 20 pom poms since you are making a model of a child mouth, and children only have 20 teeth! Give the glue to the parent.



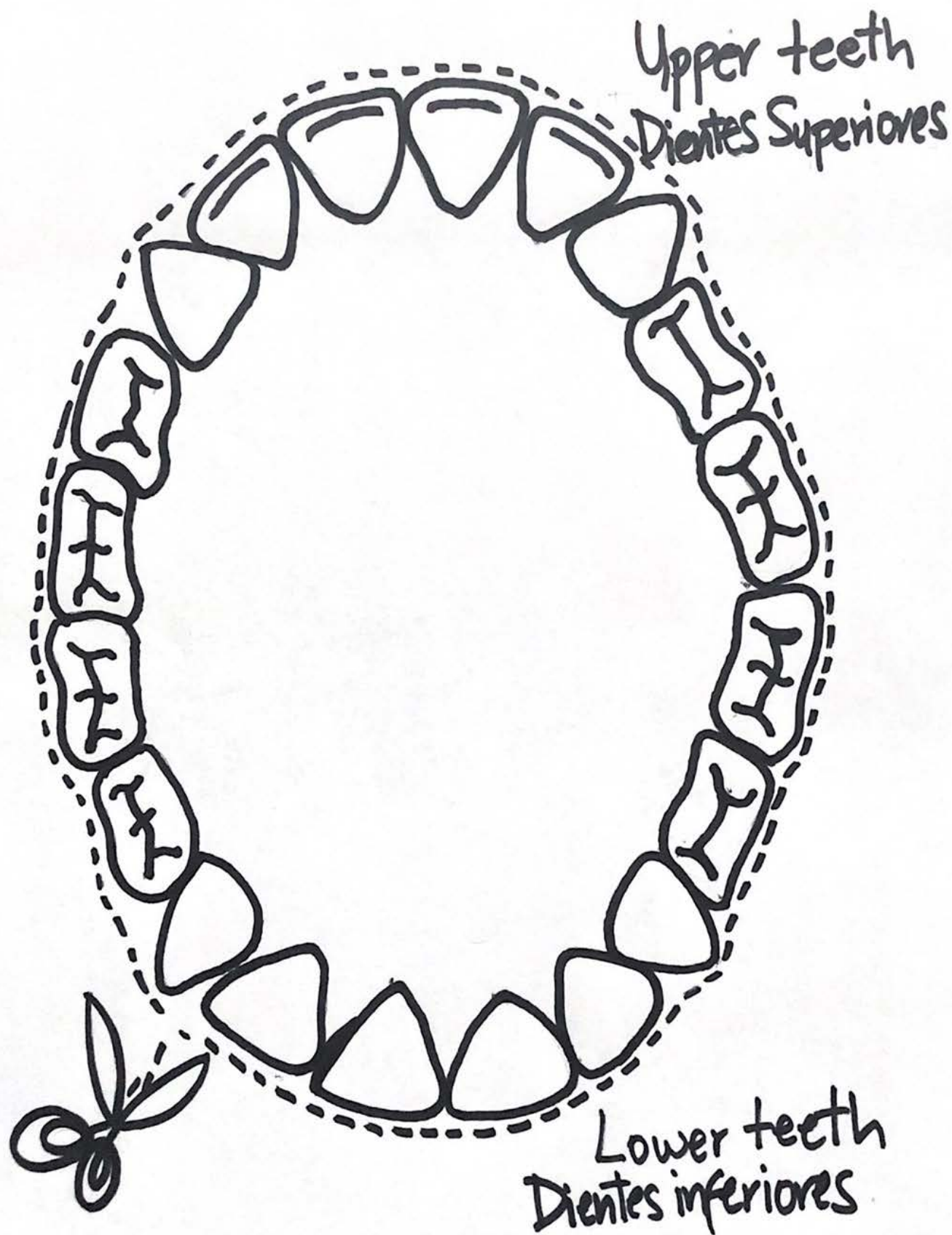
Step 8: Using the diagram of the child's teeth (page 3 of the Pediatric Guide to Children's Oral Health) as a reference, ask the parent to place some glue on the top central incisors locations on the paper mouth. Then the child can stick the pom pom to the glue. Continue asking for the identification of the remaining teeth and gluing them in until the parent and child have completed the entire mouth. Assist as needed to identify the teeth.

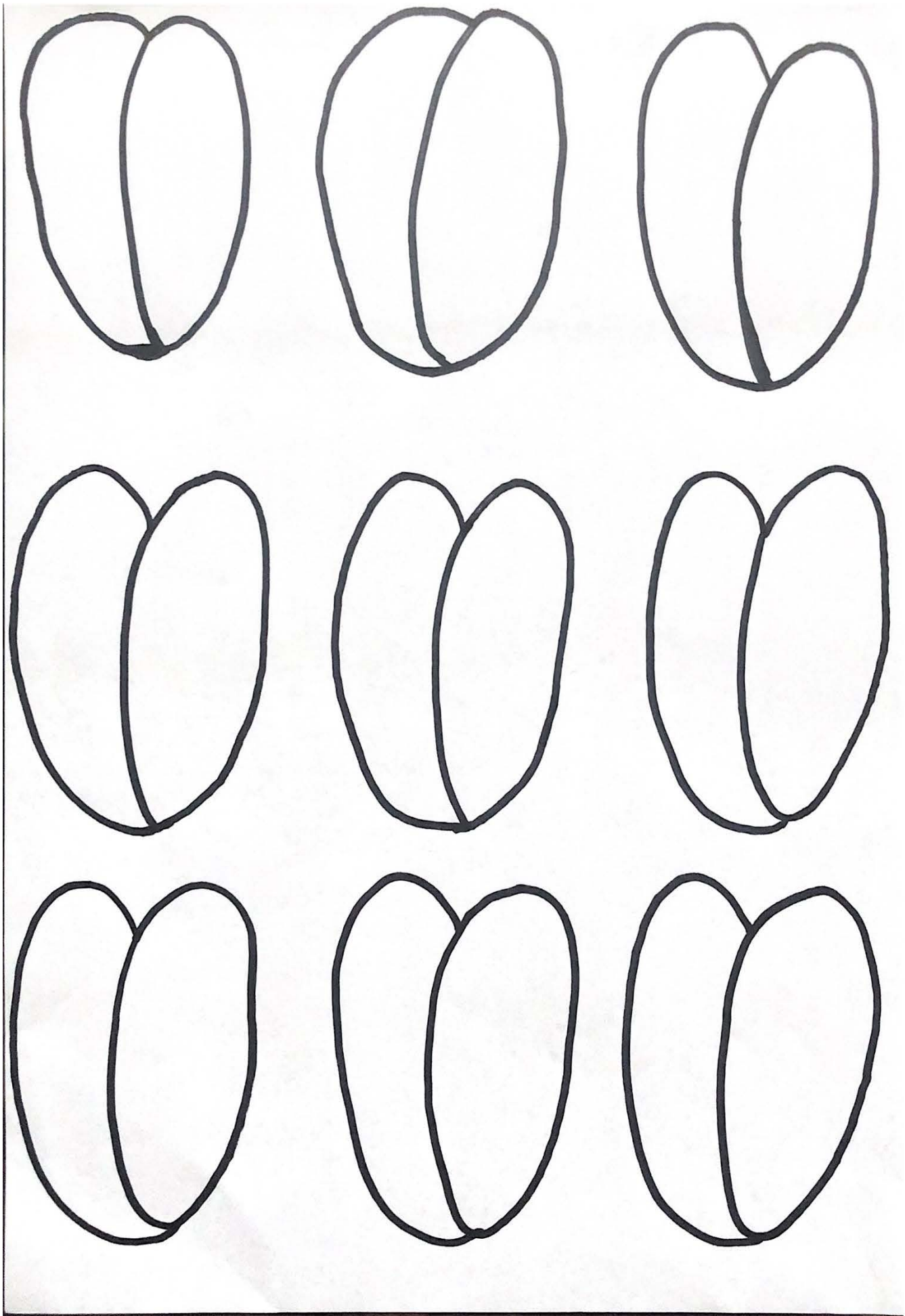


Step 9: Allow for the tooth model to dry for about 60-90 minutes depending on how much glue was used. Be generous with the glue because the pom-poms are a bit heavy.

Step 10: Play with the tooth model, show others what you learned while doing the activity.







SUPER TOOTH BINGO GAME

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Purpose: This game teaches about healthy foods.

Learning Objectives:

- Parent and child will learn healthy foods.
- Parent and child will learn that healthy foods are associated with a healthy mouth.

Materials Needed:

- Super Tooth game (available for purchase online)
- Gallon sized clear plastic bag
- Supplementary educational materials focused on nutrition, tooth brushing and fluoride (to be individually tailored according to family need)

Implementation:

Step 1: CHW provides the parent with a giant mouth shape card and a card of food items. You can also give the child, and anyone else who wants to play a set of cards.



Step 2: The CHW puts all the individual food cards into a plastic bag. The CHW shuffles the cards, pulls a card from the bag and says the name of the food depicted on the card out loud. Let the players see the card. They need to match it to the food item and then figure out what shape that is in the giant mouth. Then they place it (or some sort of marker) over that shape in the giant mouth.



Step 3: Once the other players identify the same in the mouth that corresponds to the card, they place a marker over that shape in the giant mouth. Continue drawing cards until someone fills up the entire mouth and yells out BINGO!

