**Getting ready: Oral motor activities (plain version)**

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Balancing the sensory system helps children feel more comfortable and more ready to take part and learn. Help your child prepare their body and mind by doing a few minutes of regulating activities that include lots of ‘heavy work’ - movements that need effort from their muscles and joints. You can find some ideas for whole body activities and breathing [here](https://www.autismtoothcare.com/toothbrushing/preparing-to-brush/getting-ready-to-brush/getting-you-your-child-ready).

You may also find it useful to include 1-2 activities that create calming deep pressure around the mouth. These can also regulate breathing which can help to lower heart rate and stress levels.

Preparing the mouth before brushing teeth

* If your child uses a chew tool, you can let them chew on this before brushing
* You can play a gentle teeth ‘tug of war’ with a clean washcloth. Please avoid this activity if they have wobbly teeth
* You could press the outside of your child’s face with the pads of index and middle fingers over the section of teeth you are going to brush next
* You can massage the outer gums with 1-3 sweeps of the pad of finger and thumb or a washcloth
* Using moderate pressure, use the handle of a vibrating toothbrush or toy to press along the jawline
* You can try a face massage

Oral motor games

* Blowing bubbles
* Blowing a pin wheel round
* Blowing bubbles into water with a straw
* Blowing a pom pom or cotton wool ball towards a goal or between you both across a table or on the floor
* Making exaggerated animal faces
* Puffing up cheeks and pop them, or experiment with blowing raspberries
* Smacking the lips or make popping noises with the mouth
* If neither of you are sound sensitive, try fart whistles, bird whistles, kazoos and whizzy lips
* Sucking water up through a straw or bendy straw or have a drink from a sports bottle or beaker that needs pressure and lips closed around the spout to activate the flow

