

SKILL TRAINING IN THE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS



TOOTH BRUSHING

PACKAGE FOR TRAINERS



National Institute
for the
Mentally Handicapped

Towards Independence Series - 5

SKILL TRAINING IN THE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

A PACKAGE FOR TRAINERS

TOOTH BRUSHING

(Funded by UNICEF)

National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped

(Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India)

**Manovikas Nagar, Bowenpally,
Secunderabad 500 011**

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Contributors :

Jayanthi Narayan
M.S. (Sp. Ed.) Ph. D., D.S.Ed.
Project Coordinator

A.T. Thressia Kutty
M.A., B.Ed., D.S.Ed.
Research Officer

Other titles in the series :

- * Gross Motor Skills
- * Fine Motor Skills
- * Eating Skills
- * Toilet Training
- * Bathing
- * Dressing
- * Grooming
- * Social Skills

Artist : K. Nageswar Rao

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ABOUT THE BOOKLET

This book is one among the series of books developed for the benefit of the parents and trainers of the mentally retarded and developmentally delayed children. The activities in which these children are to be trained for independent living are very many. Among them, feeding, toileting, brushing, grooming, bathing, dressing, gross and fine motor activities and socialization are some of the basic and important skills. This series of books provide in a step by step manner, procedures for finding out the delay or deficit in the child and the steps in training them. Simple language is used with appropriate illustrations so that parents and other trainers can easily follow the steps. It should be remembered that the activities listed are some of the basic ones. Common sense and imagination of the trainers will be of great assistance in enhancing the skill in the child. We hope that the trainers find these booklets useful to them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Project Advisory Committee

Dr. V. Kumaraiah
Associate Professor (Cl. Psy)
NIMHANS, Bangalore

Ms. V. Vimala,
Vice Principal
Balavihar Training School
Madras

Prof. K.C. Panda,
Principal
Regional College of Education
Bhubaneswar

Dr. N.K. Jangira
Professor (Special Education)
NCERT, New Delhi

Ms. Girija Devi
Asst. Communication Devt. Officer
UNICEF, Hyderabad

Institute members

Dr. D.K. Menon
Director

Dr. T. Madhavan
Asst. Prof. of Psychiatry

Mr. T.A. Subba Rao
Lect. in Speech Pathology
& Audiology

Mrs. Reeta Peshawaria
Lect. in Cl. Psychology

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CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction	...	1
Readiness for training	...	3
Problems during training	...	4
Possible solutions	...	5
When to train ?	...	7
How to train ?	...	8
Step-by-step training	...	11
Cleaning teeth with tooth brush	...	12
Cleaning teeth with finger	...	26
Cleaning teeth with neem stick	...	35
Developmental sequence of brushing skills	...	40
Dentist's Advice	...	42

INTRODUCTION

Normal children increasingly become independent in self help skills, as they grow older. Without much effort they learn activities like washing, feeding and dressing. For the acquisition of these skills, a mentally retarded child needs special training. The mentally retarded persons, even with profound retardation can learn some of the self help skills with systematic training.

Tooth brushing is one of the self help skills which has to be taught to the mentally retarded persons step by step. It includes

- Identification of his own brush

- Applying paste on tooth brush

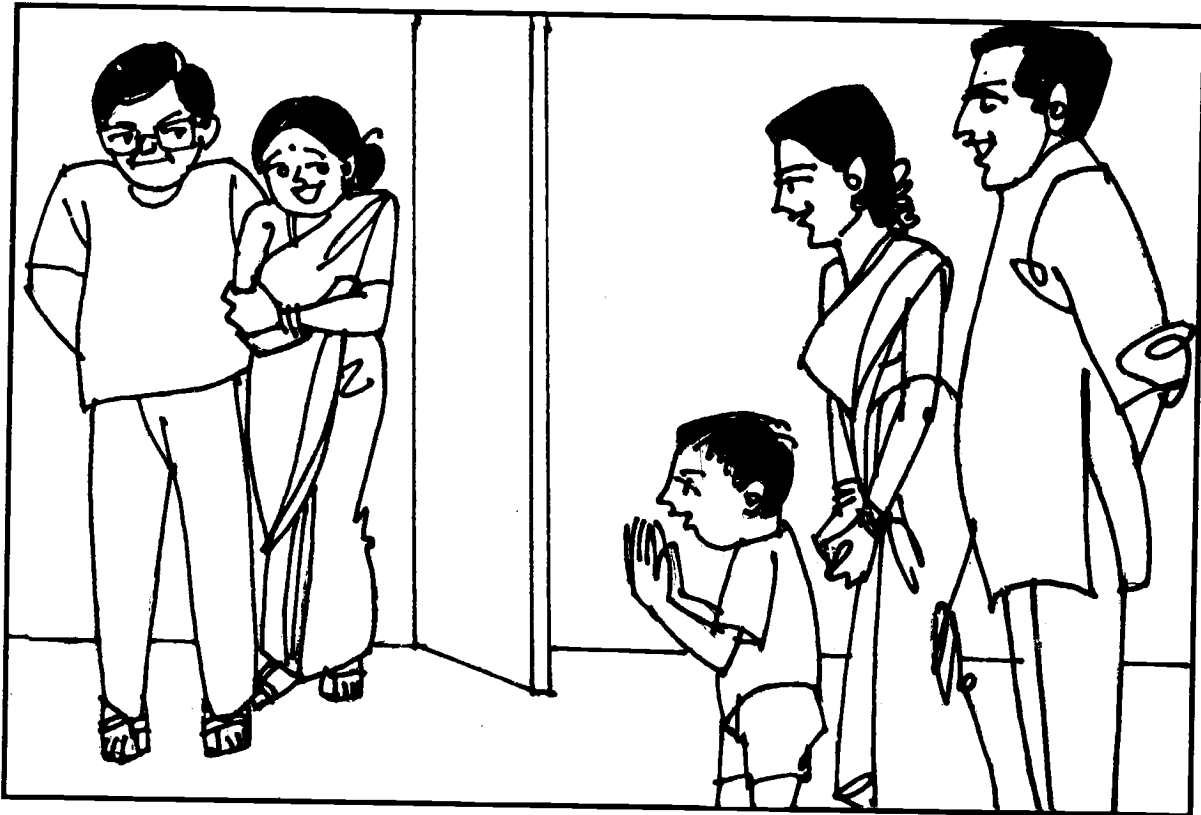
- Brushing front left, middle and right sides and inside of the teeth properly.

- Tongue cleaning

- Rinsing mouth and washing face

**WITH EVERY SKILL THAT THE MENTALLY
RETARDED PERSON ACQUIRES**

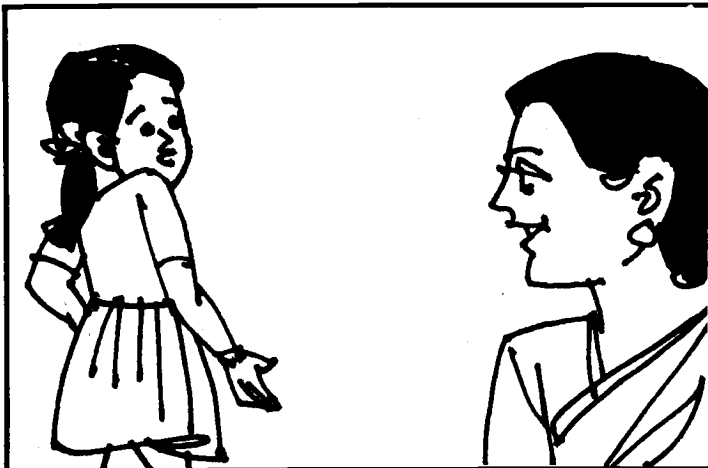
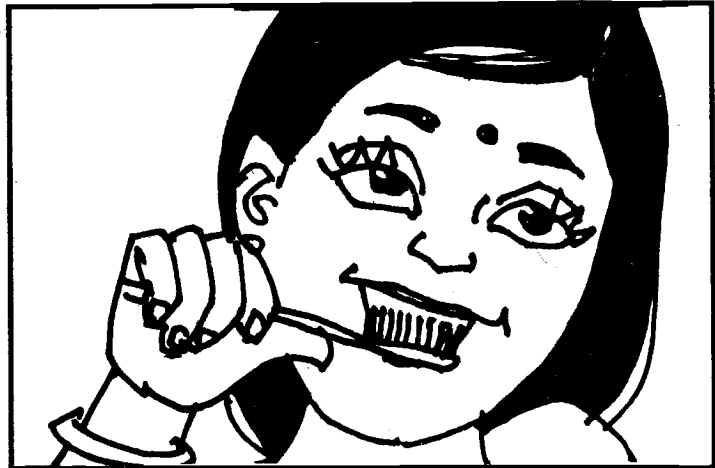
- He becomes less dependent
- He gains great satisfaction
- Workload of caretakers reduce
- The attitude of society towards him changes for the better



READINESS FOR TRAINING

To start training in tooth brushing a child needs,

Eye-hand coordination to hold the brush and to brush the teeth.



Ability to follow instruction.

PROBLEMS DURING TRAINING

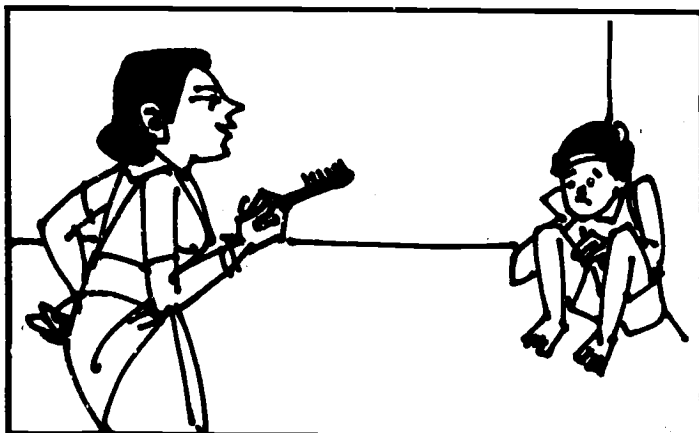
Difficulty to spit



Habit of swallowing paste



Lack of coordination of fingers to hold brush and inability to reach the back of teeth.

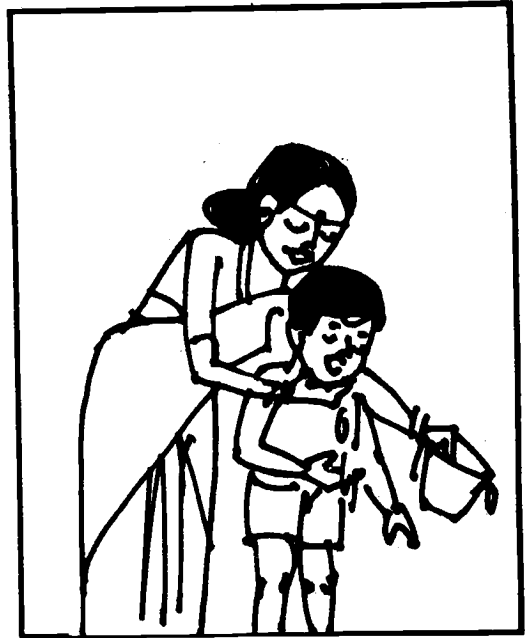


Lack of initiation to do it as a daily routine.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

If the child has difficulty to spit :

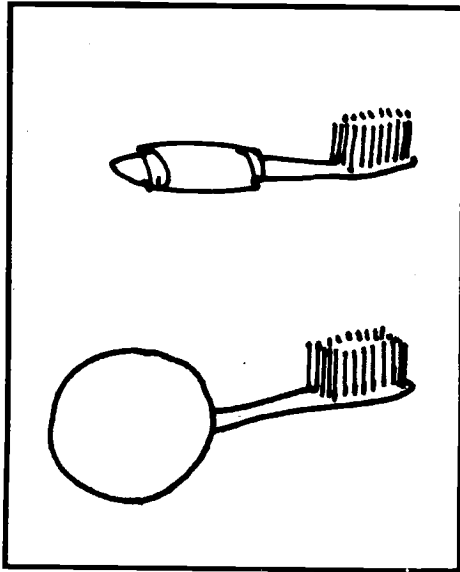
Hold the child's neck at the back and help him to bend his head. Put water into his mouth. Tell him to spit the water from mouth. Do it four to six times till the mouth gets cleaned. Use consistently one word in one language for 'spitting'.



If the child has a habit of swallowing tooth paste

The child may like the taste of the particular tooth paste. If this is the reason to swallow paste, change the tooth paste which does not taste good so that he may not swallow. At the same time, get his cooperation to brush his teeth with the new tooth paste.

The first experience a child has with a food item in the mouth is 'swallowing'. Therefore, it is natural that the child may tend to swallow. Spitting, which is the opposite of swallowing, therefore, needs to be taught. Show him by taking water in your mouth and 'spitting' in the washing area, while he watches you. Let him imitate you.

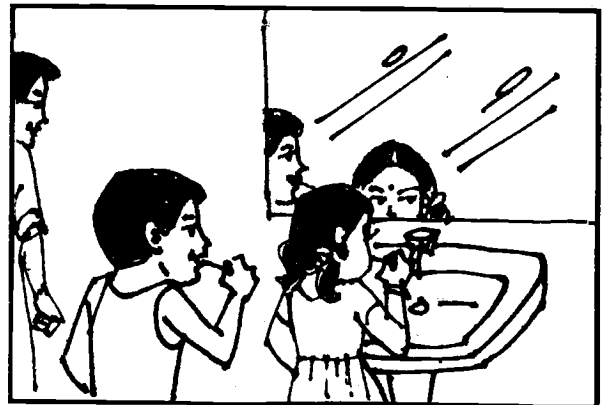


If the child has lack of coordination of fingers to hold brush :

Daily finger exercises to pick up and hold will help to improve finger coordination. The handle of the brush can be made thicker by keeping it inside a ball/covering with a piece of cloth.

If the child has lack of initiation to do it as a daily routine :

Let the child watch when the family members brush their teeth. Take him with you and motivate him to brush his teeth. children learn better from other children. If possible let his brother or sister brush with him. Use a mirror to see while brushing.



Make it a habit to have him brush teeth every morning after getting up from sleep and before going to bed.

Praise and reward him for his attempts and regularity.

Make him understand that he would get his milk/breakfast in the morning only if he brushes teeth.

WHEN TO TRAIN ?

1. Instead of simulating situations for training, make use of the actual situation:

After getting up from
sleep



Before going to bed in the
night.

**Praise and reward the child
for regularity in brushing**

HOW TO TRAIN ?

Methods to teach tooth brushing using



a tooth brush,



finger and



neem stick

are explained in this booklet.

Select the one the child has to use in his daily routine depending on his home environment.

Use the method explained step-by-step in this booklet.

Initially, get his cooperation and physically help him to do the activity. Gradually reduce the physical help and tell him what to do next till he masters the skill.

For example hold his hand and guide him to hold the brush and raise it to the mouth and brush teeth. Gradually reducing the physical aid, make him hold the brush properly and brush by himself.

Once he finishes brushing front teeth, tell him to brush back teeth, left side, then back teeth right side and so on.

Reward his attempt and success, insist on brushing his teeth at proper times and explain to him what happens if he does not keep his teeth clean - mouth stinking, teeth getting spoiled, teeth looking dirty and yellow and so on.

**Washing mouth is important
after every meal**



Appreciate his attempts and success.



Let him do it by himself. Provide a mirror to see while brushing.



Verbally guide him what to do next and how to do.



Physically help him.



Let him watch when the trainer brushes his / her teeth.

STEP BY STEP TRAINING

Cleaning teeth with tooth brush and tooth paste can be divided into 4 stages.

1. Applying tooth paste on to brush

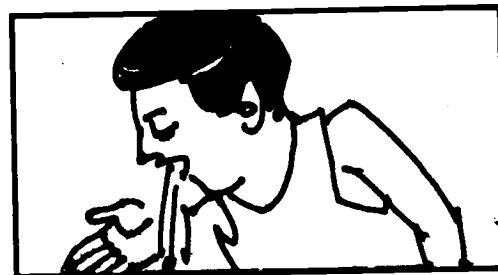


2. Brushing front, left and right teeth properly.



3. Cleaning mouth after brushing.

4. Tongue cleaning



5. Washing face with soap and drying hands and face with towel.

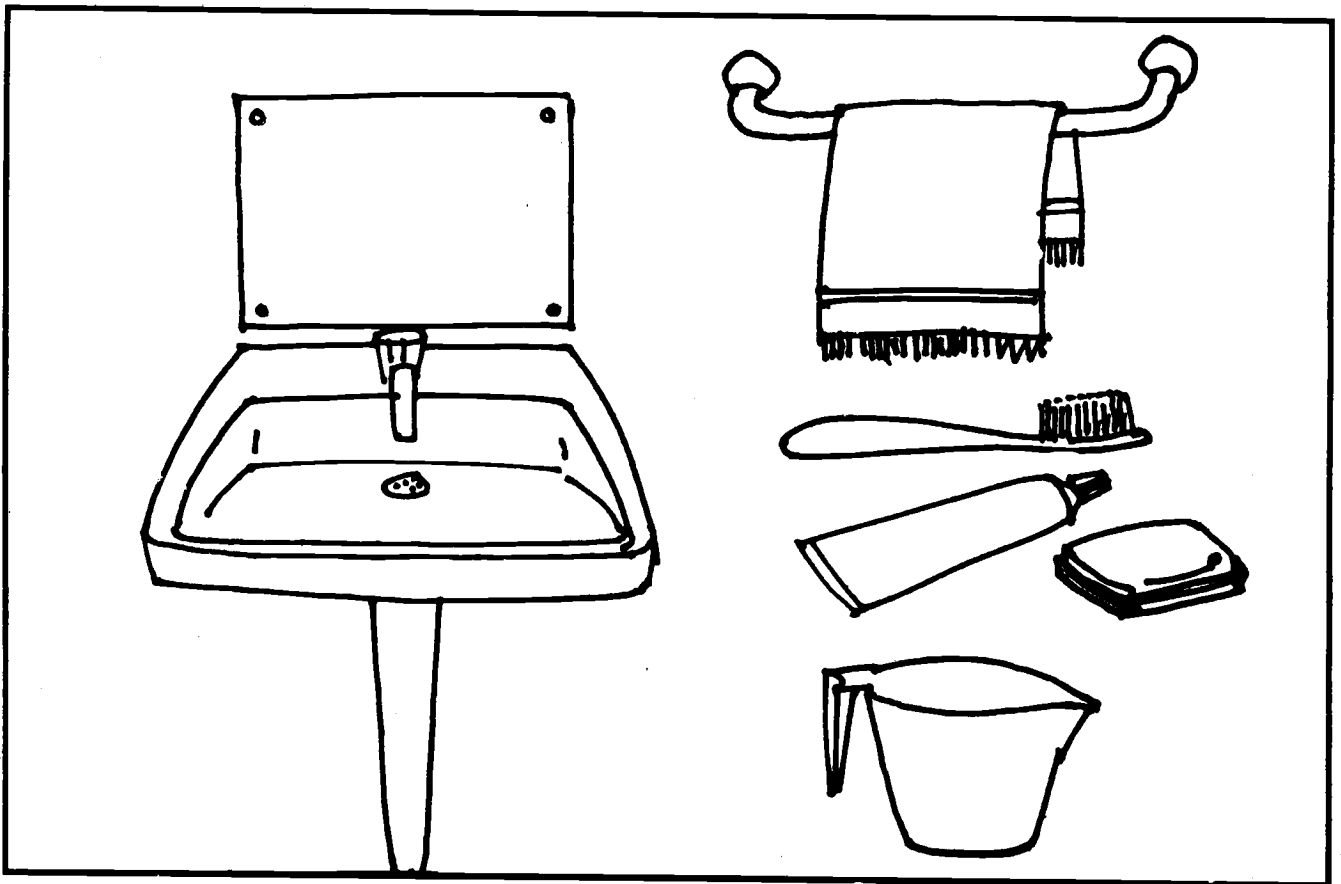


The above steps could be divided into smaller steps so that any child can learn step by step.

CLEANING TEETH WITH TOOTH BRUSH

MATERIALS NEEDED :

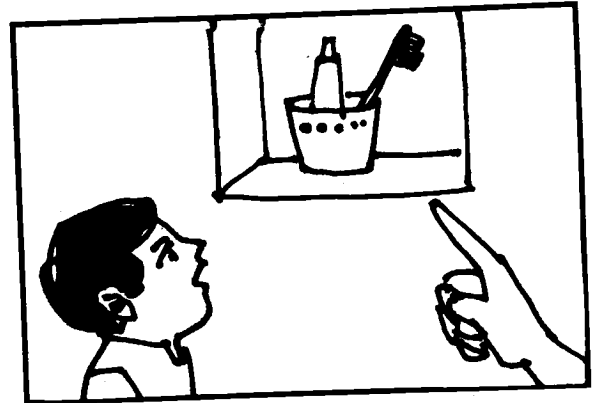
Tooth brush, Tooth paste, Wash basin, Tap water, Mug, Soap, Towel, Mirror.



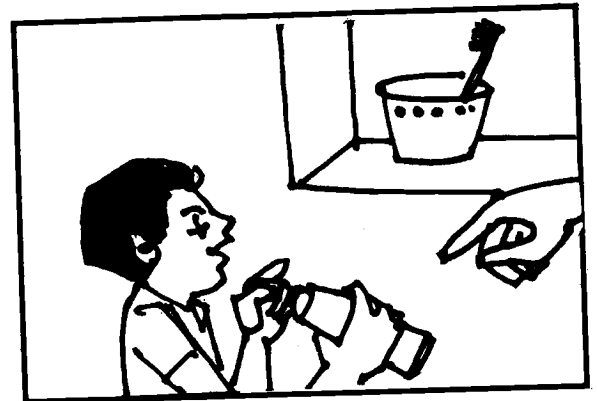
Let the child identify / name the materials needed for tooth brushing.

STEP 1: APPLYING TOOTH PASTE ON TO BRUSH

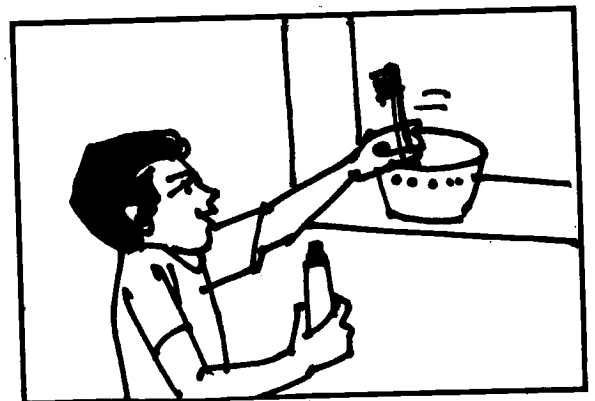
1. Show the child the shelf where the tooth brush and paste are kept. Tell him to take the tooth paste from the shelf.



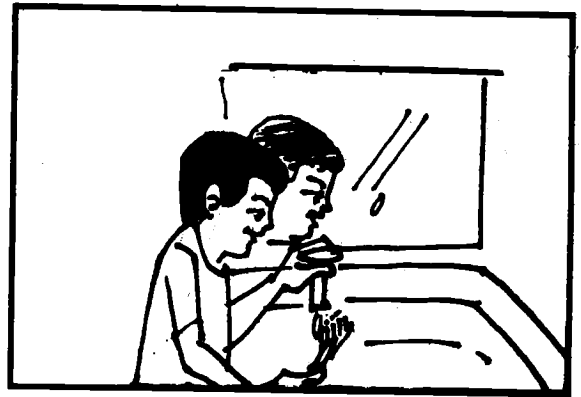
2. Guide him to take off the cap and place on the shelf.



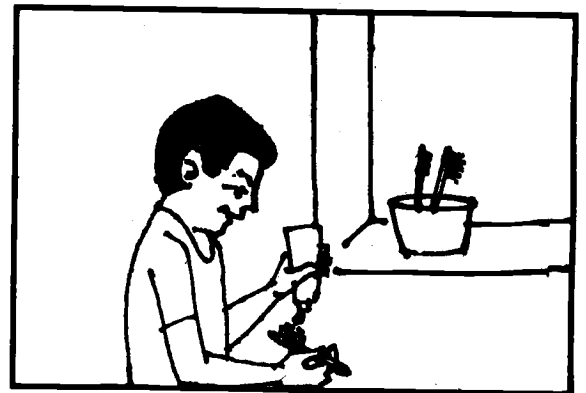
3. Tell him to take the brush from the shelf.



4. Guide him to hold the brush in one hand, open the tap with the other hand, wet the brush and close the tap.



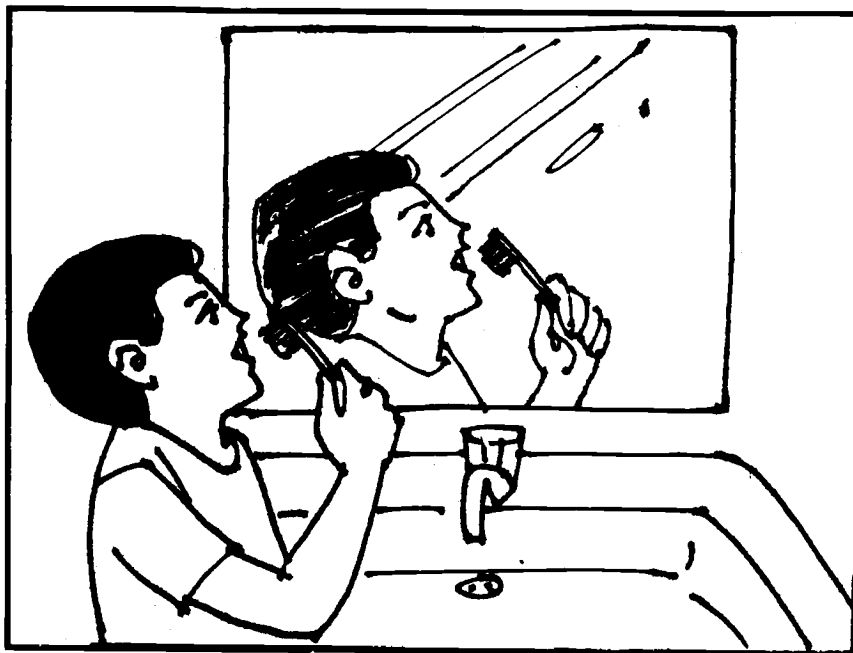
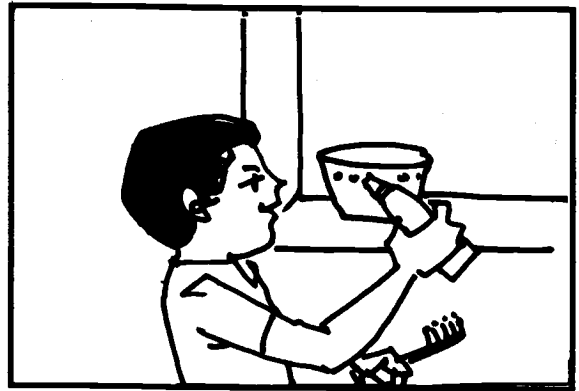
5. Help him to take the paste with the other hand. Guide him to squeeze the paste with the left hand and apply over the brush.



6. Tell him to keep the brush on the sink.

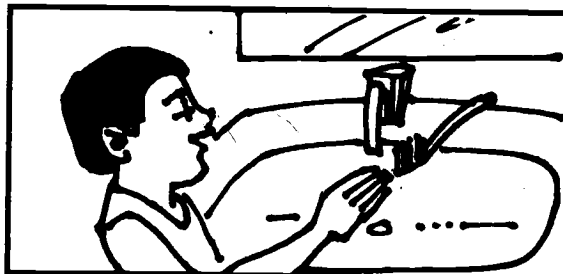


7. Guide him to take the cap from the shelf, close the paste tube and replace on the shelf.



STEP II : BRUSHING FRONT, LEFT AND RIGHT TEETH PROPERLY.

1. After keeping the paste tube on the shelf, tell him to take the brush from the wash basin.



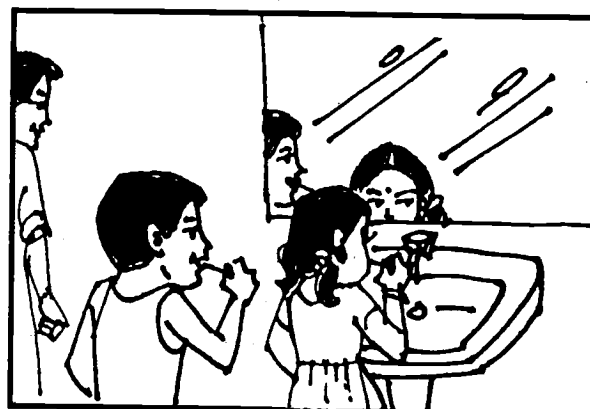
2. Guide him to move the brush, towards mouth and brush front teeth with up and down strokes.



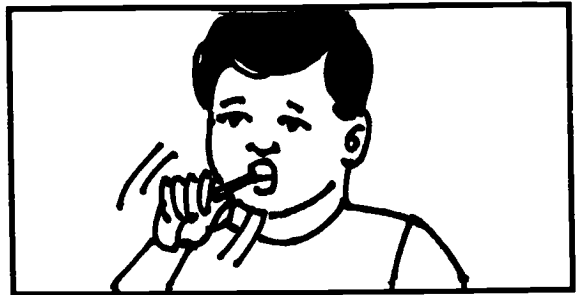
3. Guide his hands to brush backside teeth on the left side



4. Instruct him to look in the mirror
5. Let a person - preferably a brother / sister brush with him so that he can imitate the model



6. Guide him to brush back teeth-right side.



7. Demonstrate how to spit and tell him to spit.



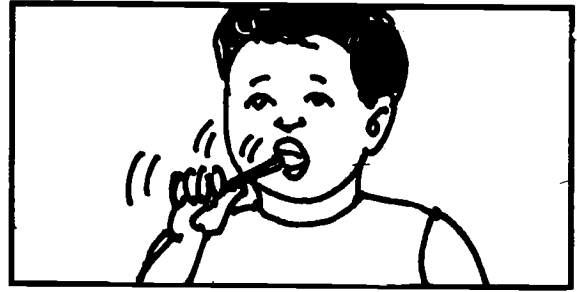
8. Guide him to brush inside back teeth left side-upper jaw.



9. Help him to brush inside back teeth left side-lower jaw.



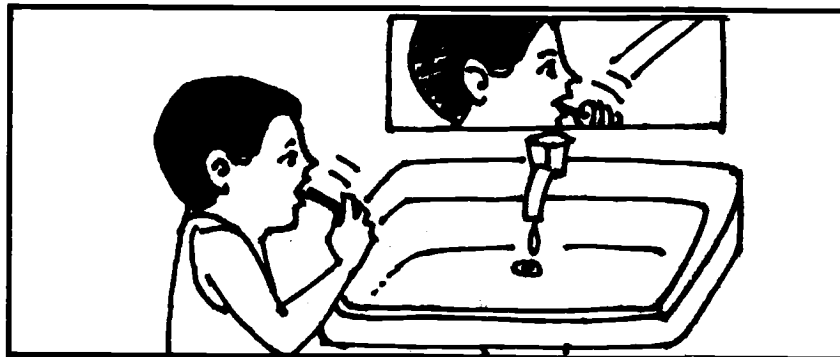
10. Guide him to brush inside back teeth right side-upper jaw.



11. Guide him to brush inside back teeth right side-lower jaw.

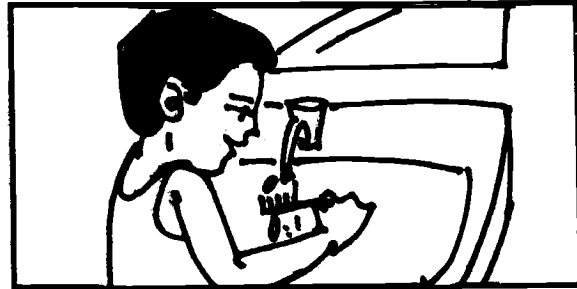


12. Tell him to spit paste out after brushing.

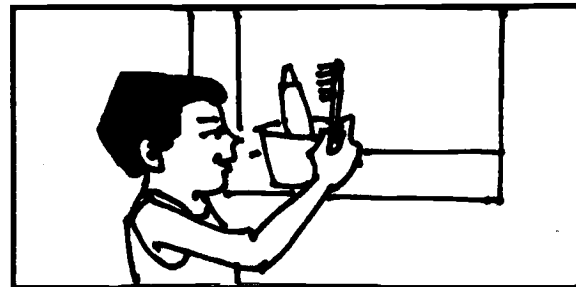


STEP III : CLEANING MOUTH AFTER BRUSHING

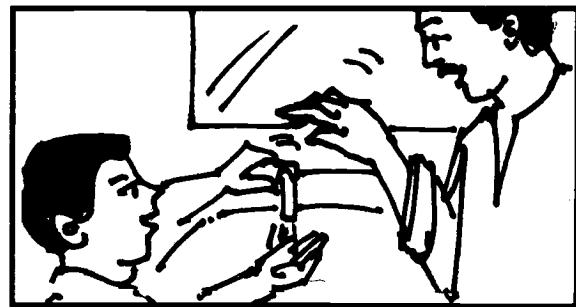
1. Guide the child to hold the brush under the water and clean it properly.



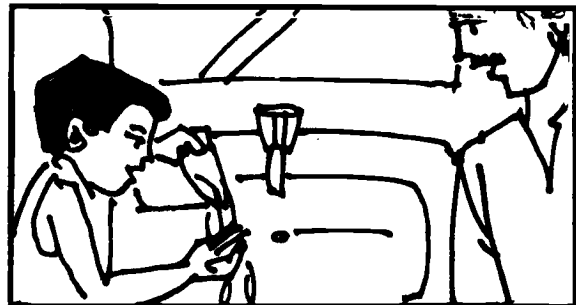
2. Tell him to keep the brush back in the shelf.



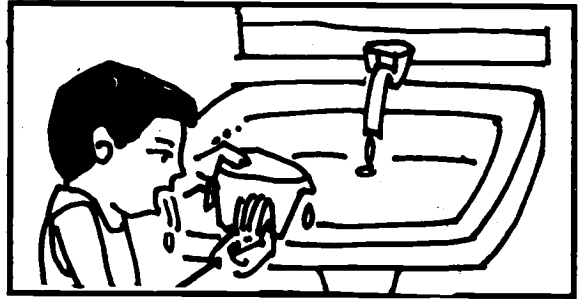
3. Demonstrate and tell him to open the tap and take the water in the right hand. If he cannot do assist him by cupping your right hand under his and help him to do so.



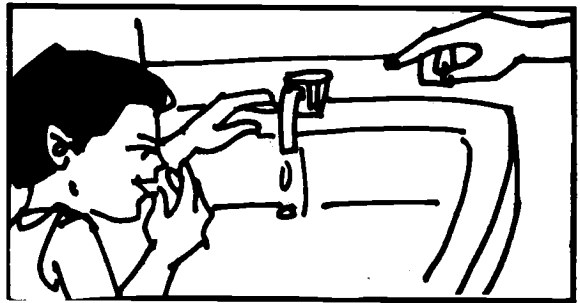
4. Guide him to take the water towards the mouth and sip. If he has difficulty in taking water in the hand, let him sip from a glass/mug directly and rinse the mouth.



5. Tell him to gargle and spit. Let him repeat it 4 to 6 times.



6. Let him wash the lips and around the mouth and close the tap.



STEP IV. TONGUE CLEANING

Tongue cleaning is also a necessary skill to be trained during tooth brushing. After rinsing mouth, teach the child to clean his tongue with a tongue cleaner.

A tongue cleaner readily available in the market can be used for this purpose.

1. Demonstrate and help the child to hold the tongue cleaner with both hands.



2. Guide him to bend his neck towards the wash basin, by holding him at the back of his neck.



In case there is no wash basin, show where he can brush teeth.

3. Tell him to put his tongue out. Hold his hands with tongue cleaner and help him to clean his tongue.



4. While reducing physical help, just touch his hands to get his cooperation and give more confidence.

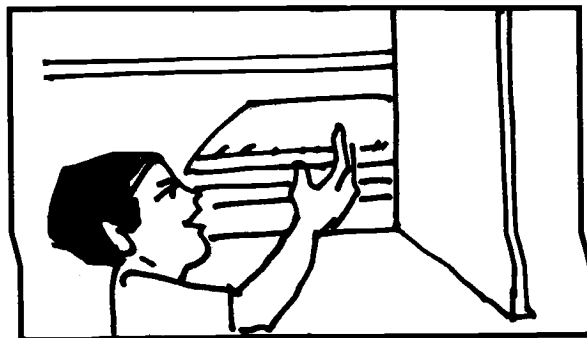


Suggestions :

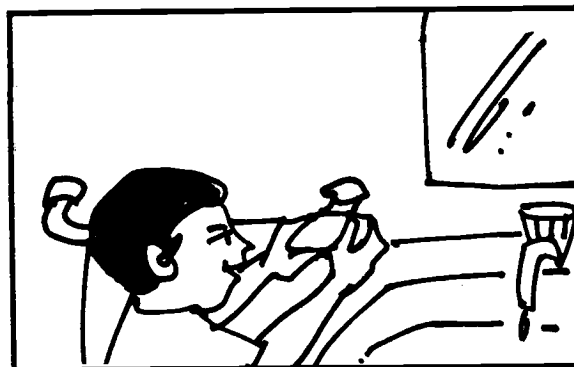
In order to avoid vomiting sensation, demonstrate and guide him on from which part of the tongue, he should start cleaning and how many times he has to do. After cleaning use the steps explained earlier, to rinse mouth.

**STEP V: WASHING FACE WITH SOAP ,
DRYING HANDS AND FACE WITH TOWEL.**

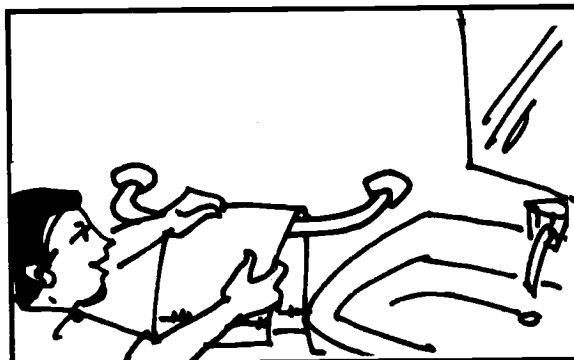
1. Let the child check whether the soap and towel are available.



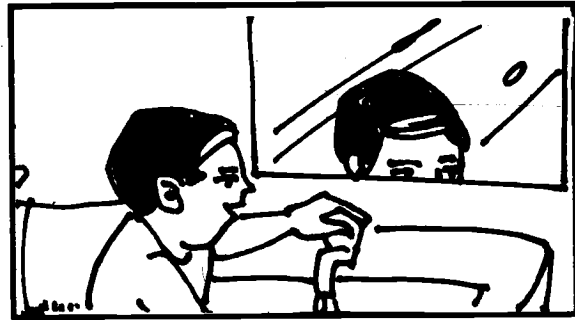
2. Guide him to place towel on the towel holder.



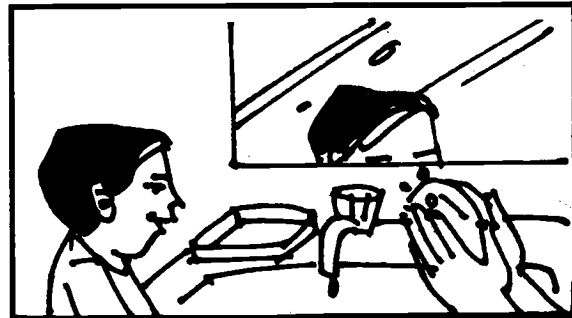
3. Tell him to open the soap box cover, and keep it on the wash basin.



4. Guide him to open the tap, keeping hands under water flow, and move hands with water towards face and wet face.



5. Demonstrate and guide him to rub soap on palms of both hands.



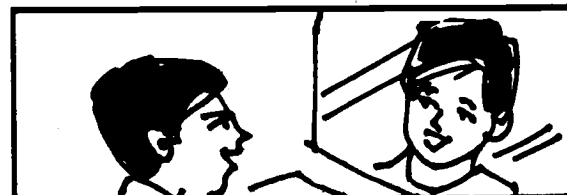
6. Tell him to close his eyes and mouth and to rub face with both palms.



7. Help him to move hands with water towards face, rub face and rinse.



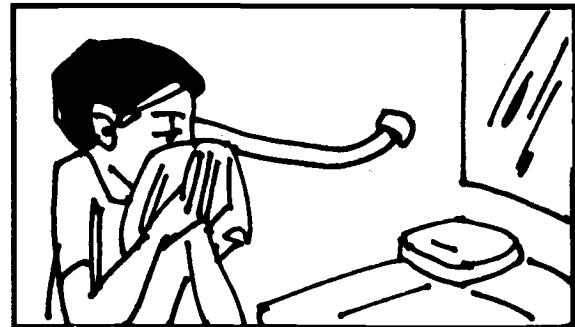
8. Open the eyes and see in the mirror if there is soap anywhere on the face. If so let him wash that off.



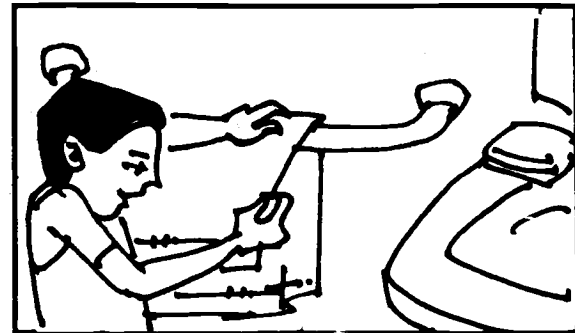
9. After washing the face well tell him to turn off water.



10. As the next step, guide him to take the towel and dry his hands and face.



11. After drying hands and face tell him to replace the towel on the towel holder to dry.



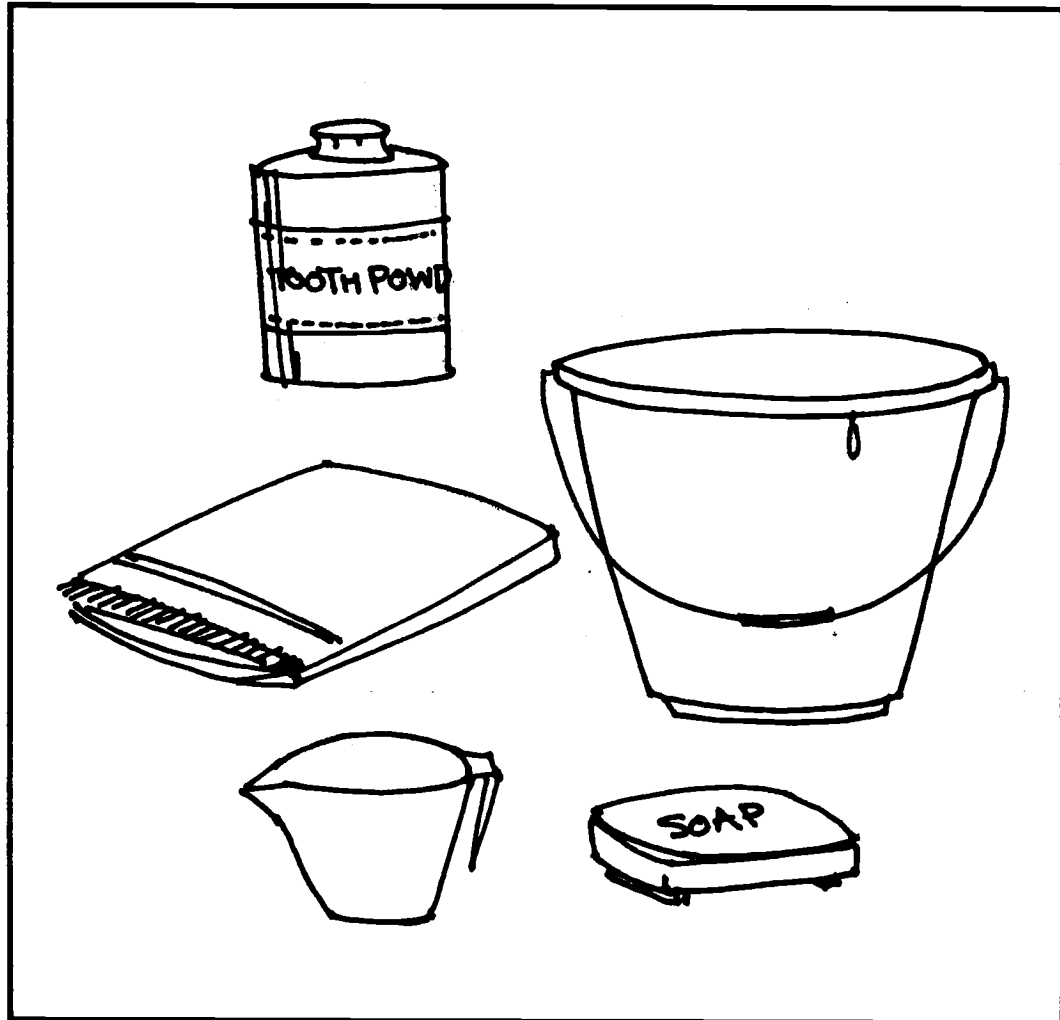
12. Praise him at every step. Gradually reduce the amount of physical and verbal prompts and make him do by himself.



CLEANING TEETH WITH FINGER USING TOOTH POWDER

Materials needed :

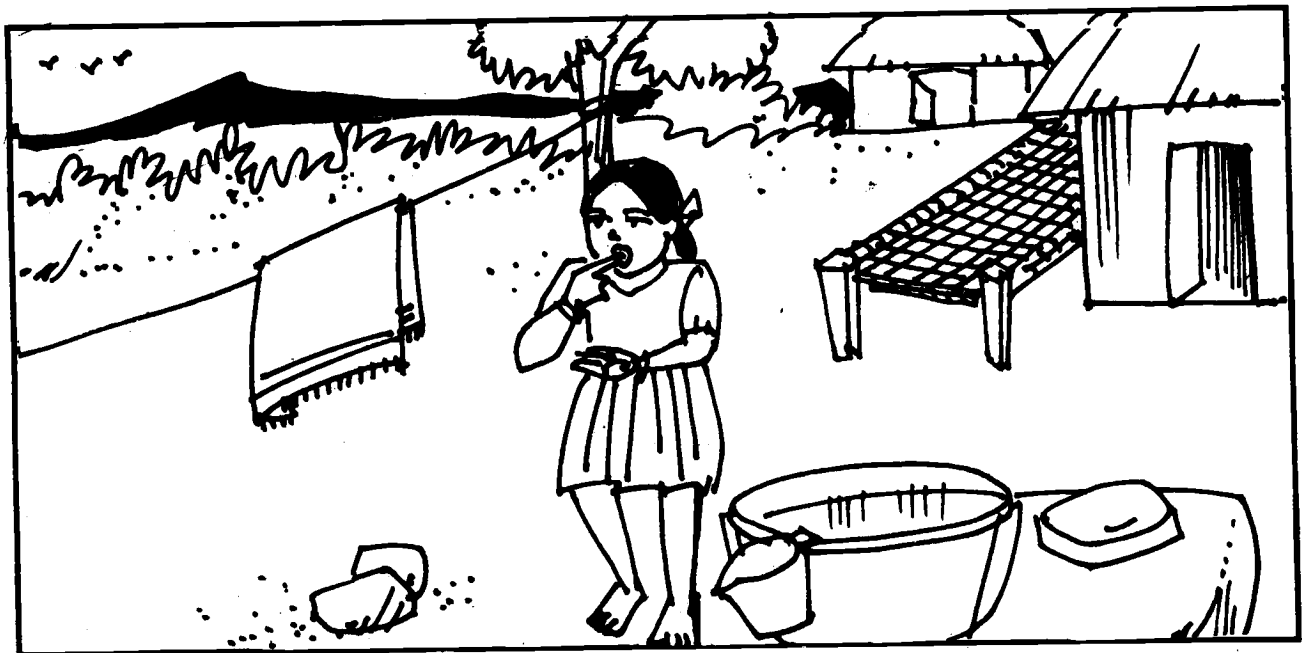
Tooth powder / ash, bucket with water, mug, towel, soap.



Teach him to identify / name the materials needed for cleaning teeth.

STEP 1 : TAKING TOOTH POWDER IN THE LEFT PALM

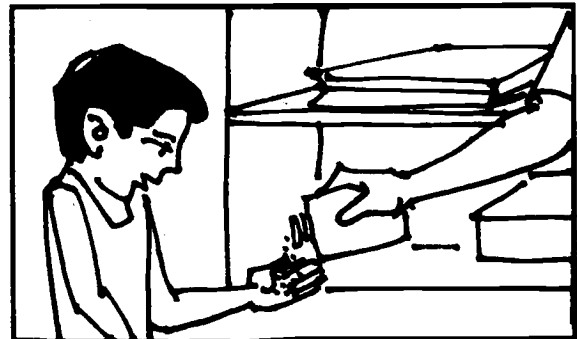
While training to brush teeth, the facility in the child's house has to be considered. If the family members brush their teeth using water from a bucket kept in the courtyard / elsewhere, train the child to brush and wash in the same environment.



1. If the child uses tooth powder, tell him to take tooth powder tin from the shelf and open it.



2. Demonstrate and help him to open it and put necessary tooth powder in the left palm.



3. After taking the necessary amount of tooth powder, guide him to close and keep back the tooth powder.

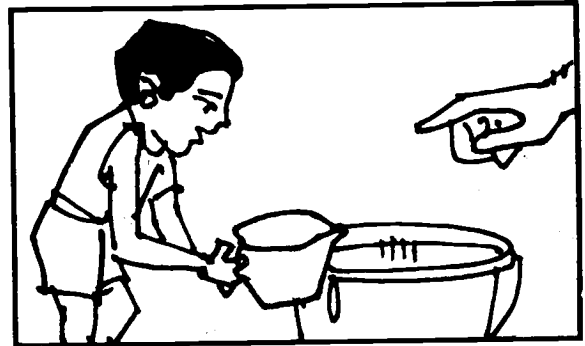


4. In case the child uses ash, tell him to take ash from the kitchen, keep it in the left palm and powder it by the right hand. Make sure that he does not take ash when the fire is burning or the oven/fire wood is hot.

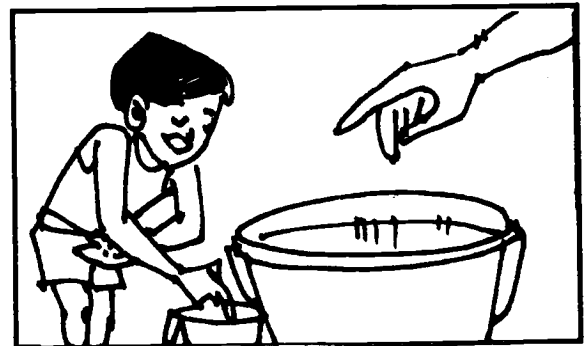


STEP II : BRUSHING FRONT, LEFT AND RIGHT TEETH PROPERLY

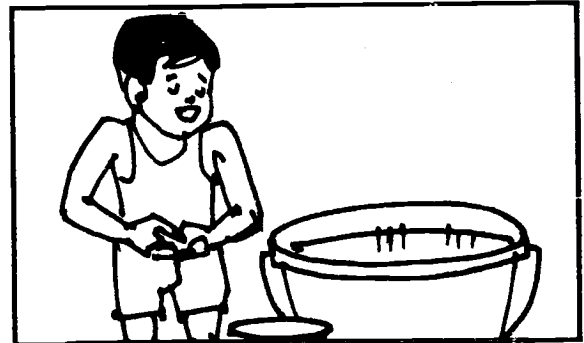
1. Keeping tooth powder/ash in the left palm, guide him to take mug and fill water from the bucket.



2. Tell him to dip his right index finger in the water.



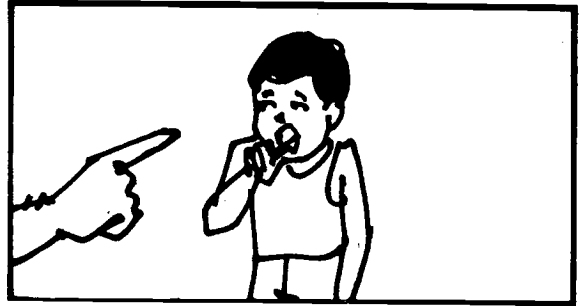
3. As a next step, guide him to dip in tooth powder / ash kept in the other hand.



4. Help him to move his finger towards mouth and make the up and down strokes on front teeth.



5. Guide him to brush back teeth left side upper and lower jaw.



6. Similarly help him to brush right side back teeth upper and lower jaw



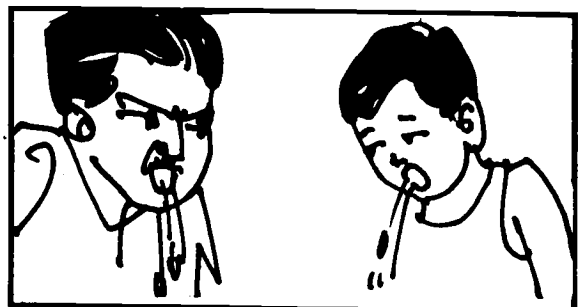
7. Let him brush the inside back teeth left upper and lower jaw.



8. Finally guide him to brush inside back teeth right upper and lower jaw.



9. Demonstrate and tell him to spit out after cleaning. Provide a mirror so that he can see.

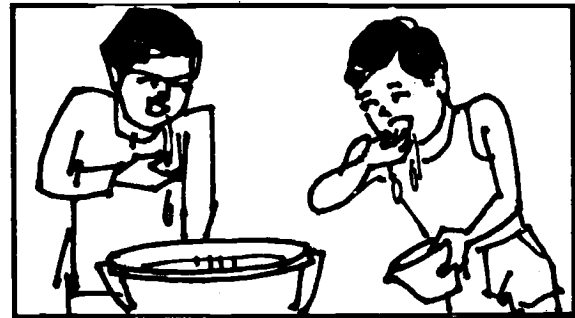


STEP III : CLEANING MOUTH AFTER BRUSHING

1. After brushing properly, tell him to wash his hands with water from the mug.



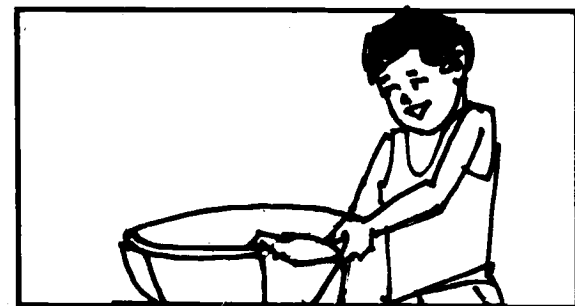
2. Guide him to take water to mouth, sip and gargle.



3. Make sure that he repeats 3 to 5 times till the mouth is clean.



4. Tell him to wash around the mouth and replace the mug.

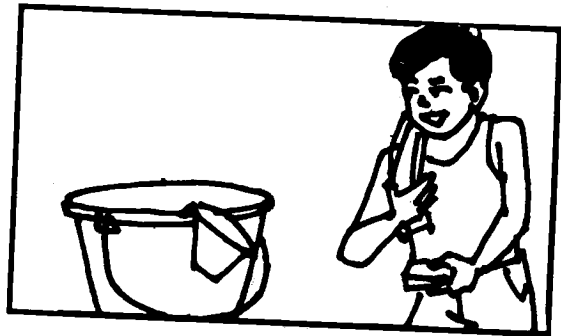


STEP IV : TONGUE CLEANING -

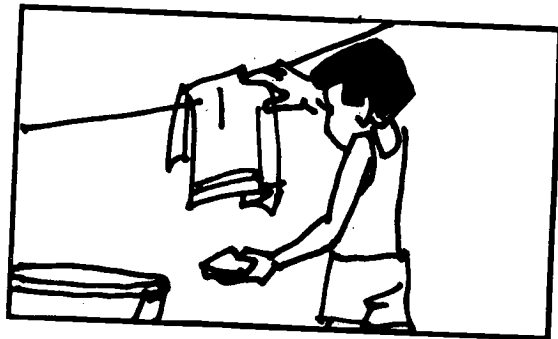
Use the step explained earlier for tongue cleaning

**STEP V: WASHING FACE WITH SOAP AND DRYING
HANDS AND FACE WITH TOWEL**

1. Tell the child to take soap and towel and go to the place where water is kept for washing.



2. Ask him to put the towel on a string near by.



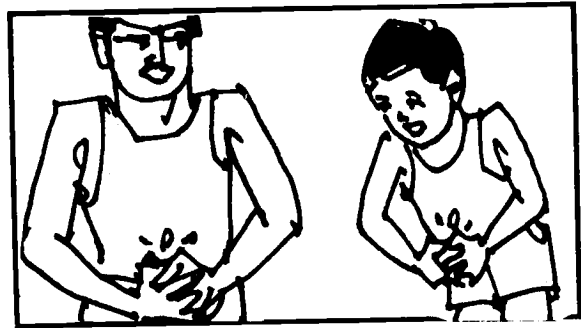
3. After keeping the soap box open, on a stone / ground near the bucket of water, tell him to take water in the mug.



4. Guide him to wet his hands and face with water taken from the mug.



5. Demonstrate and guide him to rub soap on palms of both hands



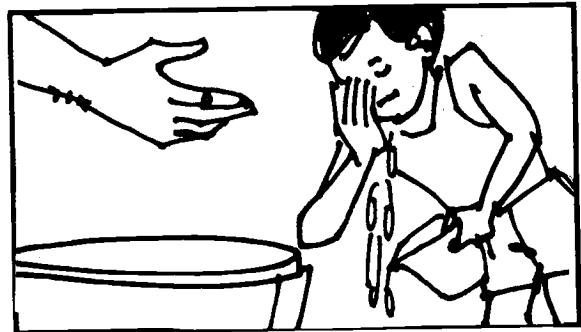
6. After keeping mug full of water near the foot tell him to close his eyes and mouth and to rub face by both palms, upwards and downwards.



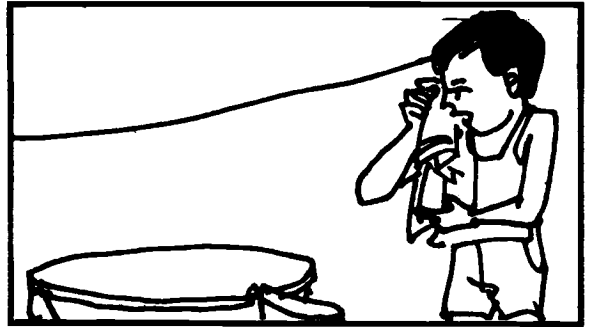
7. Guide him to wash both hands with the water kept in the mug, near the foot. Keeping water touching the foot prevents him from groping for water with closed eyes.



8. After washing hands, help him to take water in his hands, rub face and rinse.



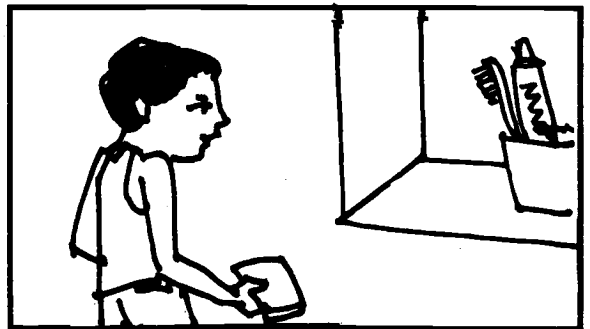
9. After repeating 3 to 5 times, tell him to take the towel and dry his hands and face.



10. Tell him to spread the towel on a string to dry.



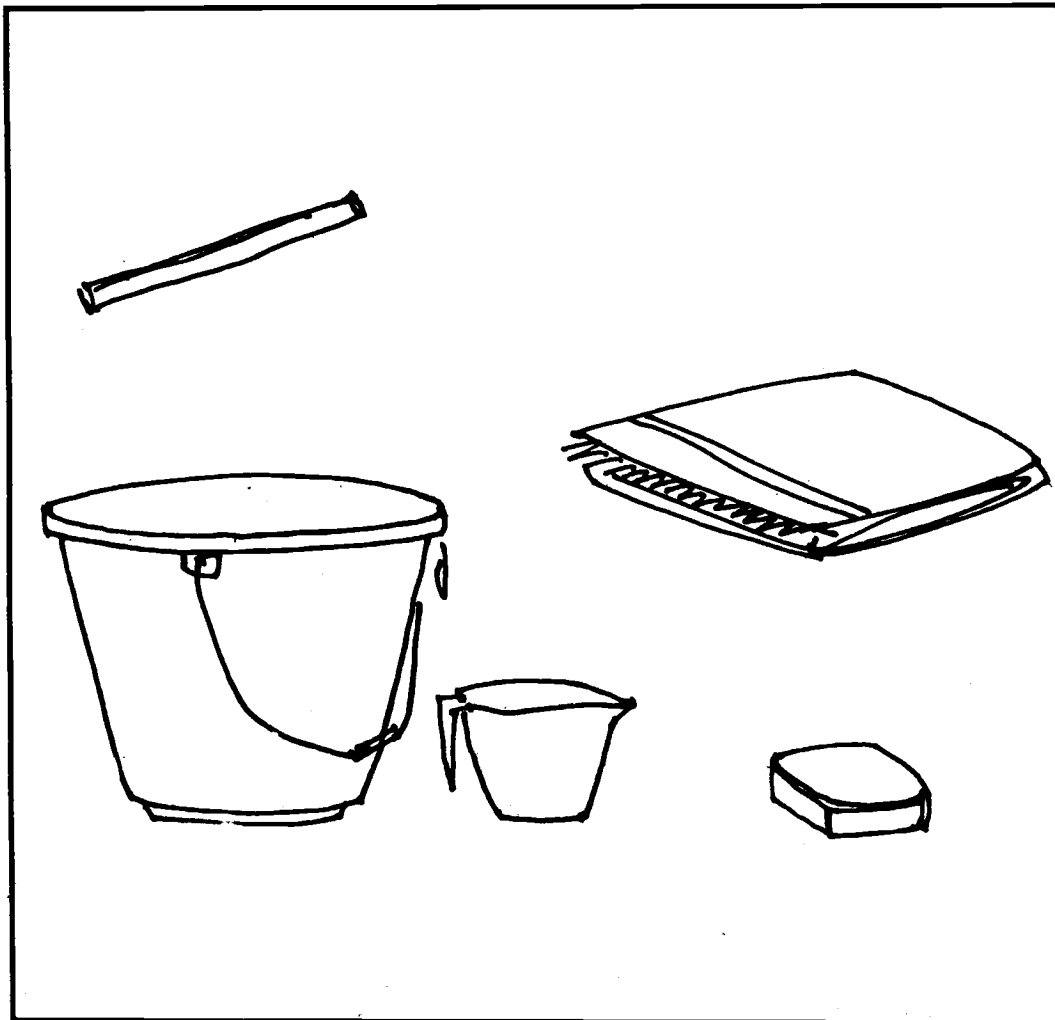
11. Guide him to close the soap case, to take with him and keep in the proper place.



**Step by step
the mentally retarded
child learns**

CLEANING TEETH WITH NEEM STICK

Materials needed : Neem stick, bucket with water, mug, soap and towel.



Let the child identify / name the materials

STEP 1: PREPARING NEEM STICK FOR TOOTH BRUSHING

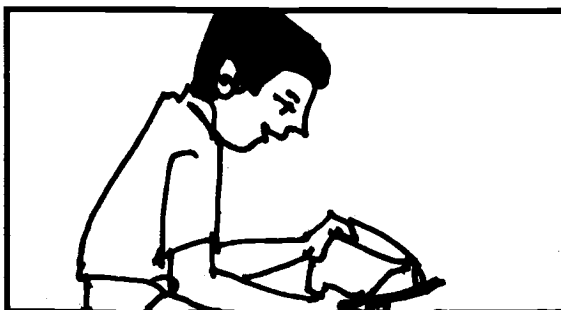
1. Guide the child to pluck one small branch from the neem tree.



2. Tell him to remove the leaves and form a stick of about 15 centimeters - length of a tea spoon.



3. Guide him to take the mug and fill water from the bucket.



4. Tell him to clean the stick in the water.



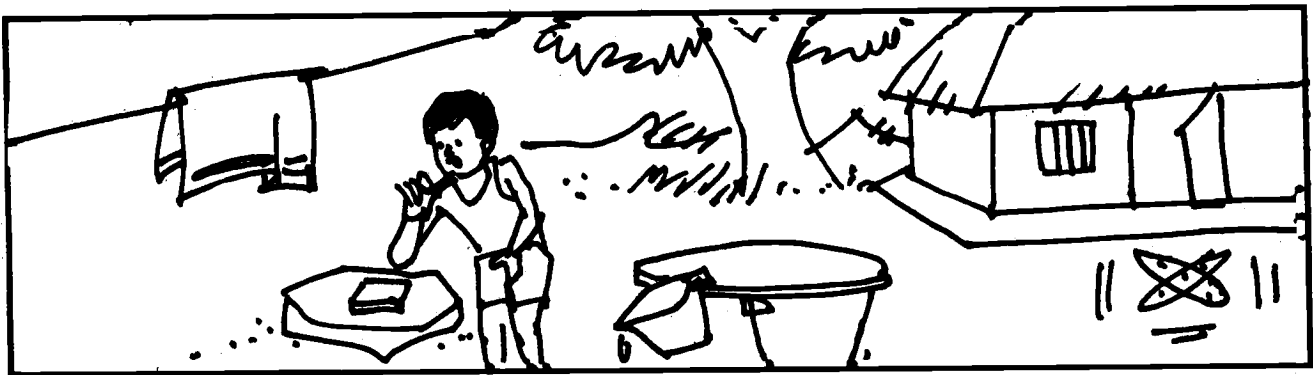
5. Demonstrate and guide him to hold the stick in the right hand, move towards the mouth, bite and chew the end. If the stick is too hard, hammer the end to make it soft.



6. Tell him to spit broken parts out.



Let the sequence of brushing the teeth be followed as given earlier for brushing with a tooth brush.



Hints :

Initially help him.
Then verbally tell what to do next.
Gradually make him do by himself.

Appreciate for every attempt. Tell in front of others how clean his teeth look because he brushed by himself.

Be patient, systematic and consistent while training.

Supervision is essential during initial stage.
Be patient, the child will learn.

**As explained in this booklet, the main steps
in tooth brushing are**

1. Applying tooth paste on to brush/taking tooth powder
2. Brushing teeth
3. Cleaning mouth
4. Tongue cleaning
5. Washing with soap and drying with towel.

While teaching tooth brushing a trainer should select the appropriate step first. A child may find it difficult to open the paste tube and apply paste on to brush and close the paste tube. He may find it easy to brush teeth. So his cooperation may be more in brushing than in applying tooth paste. Another child may show interest in washing / wiping. So the selection of order of steps is in the trainer's hand depending on the ability, interest and cooperation of the child. The trainer can start the training from the first step/last step/any step from the middle. As the child masters all the steps chain the steps from first to last so that he can be independent in tooth brushing.

See the developmental sequence of brushing skills. It will help the trainer to select the steps as per the age of the child.

DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE OF BRUSHING SKILLS

AGE	BRUSHING SKILL
1 1/2 years to 2 years	Enjoys attempting to brush teeth imitating adult.
2 years to 3 years	Uses better tooth brushing movements Attempts to wash hands when assisted.
3 years to 4 years	Wets brush and applies tooth paste. Washes and dries hands.

Reference : Fallen, N.H; Umansky, W. (1985) Young children with special needs..Columbus : Merrill Pub.

SIMPLE TO COMPLEX

Always start with a step in which the child is bound to meet with success.

As he learns the simpler steps gradually introduce the difficult steps.

Praise and reward him for his attempts and success.

DENTIST'S ADVICE

- **Brush upper teeth & gums downwards.**
- **Brush lower teeth & gums upwards.**
- **Always use a soft brush.**
- **Brushing twice a day is a must.**
- **Avoid all sticky sweets.**
- **All Mentally Retarded children are caries prone.
So a dental checkup every 3 months is a must.**

Courtesy : Dr. R. Ramasubramanian, M.D.S.
Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgeon.