

# What to Ask When Contacting a Dental Office?

A guide to help parents/caregivers of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) with dental appointment questions.



- 1. Does this dental office have any experience treating patients with I/DD? Is this office familiar with [insert diagnosis or need]?** Ask the office to describe their previous experiences. Remember to address any initial concerns you may have.
- 2. How does this office prepare for I/DD visits?** Ask how the dental office helps manage an I/DD patient's anxiety with long wait times and crowded wait rooms. How are appointments scheduled?
- 3. Can we tour the office prior to the appointment?** If needed, explain how advance visits can help the person with I/DD become comfortable with the office and staff members.
- 4. What behavior support strategies does the office use to help patients?** Do they use non-verbal communication systems (picture cards for "yes/no" or "stop/go"), or positive verbal reinforcement?
- 5. Does your office provide a low stimulation treatment room or environment?** Ask if they have calming music, dimmed lighting, and low noise environments to help calm I/DD patients.
- 6. Do you provide any comfort devices?** Ask if they have items that can help with anxiety such as weighted blankets, squeeze balls, and other sensory stimuli.
- 7. Do you have support items to help entertain the patients?** Examples include dark glasses, headphones, tablets, or televisions in exam rooms.
- 8. Does your office allow for extra time to treat I/DD patients?** If needed, explain that the dental staff may have to do a lot of explaining and comforting to ensure the patient's teeth and gums can be thoroughly checked.
- 9. Does your office have the option to use any of these services below, if necessary?**
  - a) Papoose board
  - b) sedation
  - c) anesthesia.It's best to know if the dental provider has privileges at any local hospital or ambulatory surgical center if treatment needs to be provided in this setting.



Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_