If your child is sensitive to touch, they may dislike the feeling of a toothbrush inside of their mouth. Thus, when faced with the task of brushing their teeth, they may become upset or distressed before or during this task. You can try a variety of strategies to help your child prepare for and get used to the feeling of brushing their teeth.

**GENERAL TOOTH BRUSHING STRATEGIES FOR ORAL SENSITIVITY**

- Try using a washcloth to wipe the inside of your child’s mouth before using a toothbrush
- Try using a Nuk toothbrush before a regular bristled toothbrush
- Soft bristles are easier to tolerate vs. harder bristles, so try a soft bristle toothbrush first!
- Try a vibrating toothbrush, as your child may like the sensation and find it soothing
- If your child will tolerate it, prior starting your tooth brushing routine massage your child around their mouth area from the cheeks towards the lips to prepare for teeth brushing

**ADDITIONAL SENSORY STRATEGIES FOR TOOTH BRUSHING**

- If you child likes deep pressure, give them bear hugs or squeezes, or have them give themselves a big hug before attempting to brush their teeth
- Your child can tense up like a statue or push on a doorframe and then release to calm themselves prior to tooth brushing
- Your child can practice pushing their lips together and then releasing to prepare for tooth brushing *(Henry, Kate-Windland & Swinderland, 2007; Aquilla, Sutton & Yack, 2003)*

These strategies can be compiled into a Sensory Story, which demonstrates these strategies in an easy to read story that your child can understand.

A Sensory Story can be provided to you by your occupational therapist! *(Marr & Nackley, 2006)*