



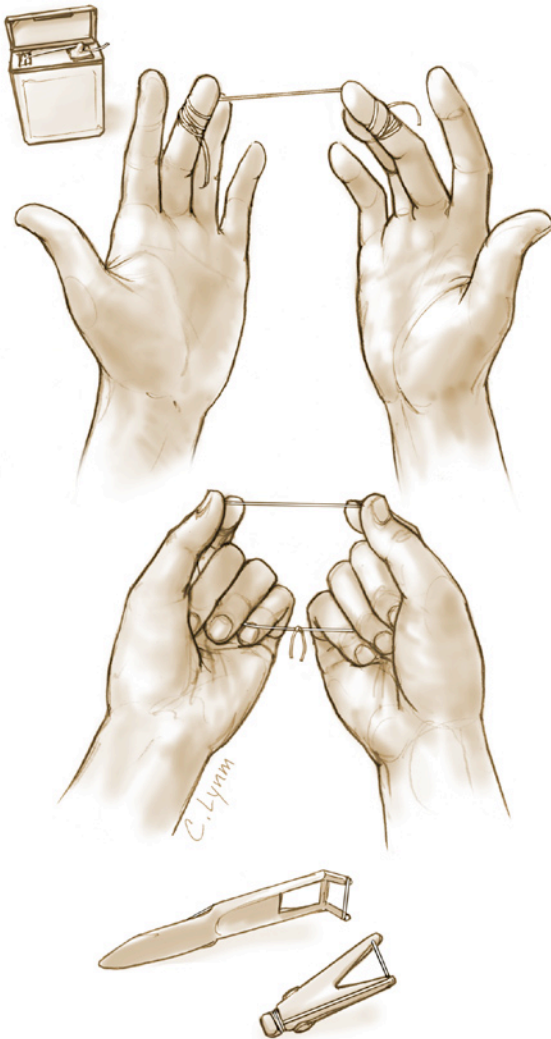
SPECIAL CARE

An Oral Health Professional's Guide to Serving Young Children with Special Health Care Needs

Flossing

If the edges of your child's teeth touch each other, flossing is important. Parents need to floss their child's teeth. Most children can't floss their own teeth, and some children with special health care needs may never be able to do this by themselves. Children with uncontrolled movements who try to floss on their own may hurt their gums.

1. Take a piece of dental floss that is about 18 inches long and wrap it around the middle finger of each hand. You can also tie the ends together in a circle, or use a floss holder that you buy.



2. Holding floss firmly between the thumb and index finger of each hand (hold a section of about one-half inch in length in each hand), work the floss gently between the teeth until it reaches the gums. Don't press or snap the floss into the gums.



3. Curve the floss into a C-shape around the side of the tooth. Slide it up and down the side of the tooth. Remove the floss carefully, and do the same thing again for each tooth, using a clean piece of floss each time. While flossing, be sure not to hurt the gums. Keep movements careful and gentle whenever the floss touches the gums.

