



Corn Cob Smiles

A Fun, Hands-On Oral Health Activity for Community Organizations



OBJECTIVE

Help children and families understand the importance of daily flossing as part of a healthy oral care routine.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Corn Cob Smiles is an engaging, interactive oral health education activity that teaches participants why flossing is important. Using a corn cob to represent teeth, participants discover how food and plaque can hide in places a toothbrush alone cannot reach. This easy-to-run program is perfect for schools, afterschool programs, youth groups, health fairs, family events, and community organizations.



ArkansasFoundation



Corn Cob Smiles



Healthy smiles need brushing *and* flossing! Brushing cleans the front, back, and top of teeth—but flossing cleans between teeth, where food and plaque often hide.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Fresh corn cobs (cut in half if needed) • Ground coffee • Foil pans or trays • Toothbrushes • Yarn • Napkins or paper towels

DIRECTIONS

1. Pick Up Your “Smile”

Give each participant a clean corn cob.

2. Add the “Food Particles”

Rub coffee grounds onto the corn cob, especially in the cracks between kernels.

3. Brush the Teeth

Use a toothbrush to try removing the coffee grounds.

4. What Did You Notice?

Ask participants:

- Could you clean between all the kernels with just the toothbrush?
- Were some pieces still stuck?

5. Introduce Flossing

Use yarn to show how floss reaches between teeth where toothbrush bristles cannot.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Q: How many times a day should you floss?

A: Once a day

Q: What motion should you make when you floss?

A: A gentle “C” shape around each tooth

Q: What is the best time of day to floss?

A: At night before bed, but anytime is better than not flossing