A MESSAGE TO PARENTS:

Being a parent myself, I know how difficult it can be to find health care providers for our children. For this reason, I would like to give you a brief description of our practice so you may understand how our office operates and to determine if this office seems like a good fit for you.

Our office mission is simple: To help each child gain a healthy smile through quality dentistry. Everything we strive for is geared around giving each patient the best possible experience with the best possible care. This means educating not only our patients but also parents about topics unique to pediatric dentistry. Prevention is key and along with options such as offering dental sealants, I truly believe this will give every child the best chance to have a healthy smile. Although there are challenges in reaching this goal, together we can discuss the best path to succeed.

We recommend your child’s first dental check-up by baby’s first birthday. The reason for such an early visit is to allow us to be proactive rather than reactive in the fight against decay. Hawaii has been said to have one of the highest decay rates in the nation making it all the more important to get an early jump on prevention. Addressing decay causing conditions and habits early on will be valuable information for a healthy beginning.

Choosing the right pediatric dentist for your family can be overwhelming. There are many paid advertisements in magazines and other social media that are there to hopefully attract your attention. The best way to find a good dentist is through word of mouth. Asking your friends, neighbors, and co-workers about dentists they have had personal experiences with can give you the best information. In your quest to find a good pediatric dentist: (1) make sure he/she IS a pediatric dentist. Hawaii allows general dentists to limit their practice to children even if they did not go through the extra 2-3 years of education and training that pediatric specialists have received. (2) Social media can be helpful but be wary when reading negative comments...there are always two sides to every story. (3) After your first meeting with the dentist of your choice, make sure you are comfortable with both doctor and staff members. Ask questions. Your child is your most prized possession so no question is too trivial.

Every health care profession or business requires great employees in order to provide quality care and exceptional customer service. I have set the highest standards for each one of my employees, including myself and any other dentist who is a part of this practice. Although we are a busy practice, I employ a large number of full time staff members to assist you and your child with personalized attention to have the best dental experience possible. All of our dental hygienists are licensed registered dental hygienists who are all child friendly who many of our patients refer to as “Aunty”. I believe our hygienists play an important role in the pediatric dental experience in that they help to introduce dentistry to your child in a very gentle way. Parents of young children are welcome to accompany their child for their initial visit and future check-up appointments but at about age 4, we ask that you encourage your child to accompany our assistant on their own as we are trying to build a confident patient. However, when any dental operative procedures such as fillings, crowns, etc. need to be performed, we kindly ask that parents remain in the waiting room. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, just ask one of our front staff members to check on your child for you and they will gladly do so. We can explain the rationale for this
policy at the time of your examination visit. If you feel that being with your child during operative procedures is non-negotiable, we fully understand your decision to pursue another dental office that will accommodate your needs.

Treating young or anxious patients can be very challenging and stressful for parents. Oral sedations or Nitrous Oxide are offered as options for young patients or nervous patients and is not forced upon any parent who feels uncomfortable with its use. The objective is to help your child be as comfortable as possible during their dental procedure. By keeping them relaxed, this will affect the quality of the restoration being placed as well as making the overall experience a better one. Using a sedative or Nitrous Oxide can also help reduce the number of appointments needed for larger treatment plans as it can help keep a child comfortable for a longer period of time. Sedation has been recognized as safe when administered correctly and its use has also been deemed safe by our national association, The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

Our office prioritizes seeing patients with dental emergencies or patients who are in pain. We will accommodate your emergency in every way possible as taking a child out of pain is always one of our top priorities.

Because I believe in practicing truthful dentistry, where dental treatment is based on need only, I do not participate in production based bonus systems or employ consultants to maximize profits. I do not believe that this type of philosophy can co-exist with keeping the patients best interest a priority. In our office, we make every effort to explain and show any cavities to parents so they are fully aware of what is happening with their child’s teeth. With digital x-ray technology, it is easy to point out cavities between teeth that are not visible in the mouth. Not every cavity on a baby tooth needs to be filled but becoming aware of existing problem areas can help determine focus areas as you help your child with their daily home care regimen.

My hope is that this gives you a little insight as to what our practice philosophies are and what to expect from us. Thank you very much for taking the time to read this and I wish you the best of luck in finding a pediatric dentist that is right for your child.

Sincerely,

Dr. Derek Tom