

Where the Wild Things Are

How Happy Kids Dental is taking paediatric care seriously by adding an element of fun into dentistry



The incredibly innovative children-only dental clinic, situated in the heart of London's West End, is more theme park than dentistry, more fun-filled than fillings and cleverly less 'in-your-face' clinical than your average dental practice. Games consoles, interactive screens, ceiling-mounted TVs and giant puzzles and games are dotted throughout the two-storey practice and an array of giant cartoon animal characters signpost its young patients on a journey through a jungle-themed setting.

Unsurprisingly, the inspiration for this practice of kids' dreams was born in the USA. The concept has been brought to life by the imagination of the brother and sister partnership of Yevhen Hunyak and Roksolana Mykhalus, who saw a gap in the market for an exclusively paediatric service when they were disappointed with a lack of quality paediatric dental care for their own children.

Having opened its doors exclusively to its young patient base back in the summer, Happy Kids Dental is pulling in a high volume of patients, helped perhaps by its large Art Deco-style windows, through which passers-by are given a visual treat into the world of a different kind of dentistry.

The memorable patient journey starts the moment youngsters walk through the doors – they can have a selfie taken in reception at the photo booth sitting alongside two toothy hippos, play on iPads or, for those who prefer a little less interaction, there's a quiet space, too. The appointment concludes at the practice's

brushing station, where little ones get the chance to clean the teeth of a menagerie of jungle animals, and finally it's win-a-prize time at its fairground-esque game.

The friendly environment is something the team worked hard to create with help from some leading dental companies, including Belmont who supplied the funky orange dental chairs, which have been fitted with the company's luxurious supersoft upholstery. If you want a child to sit still and relax, it makes sense that the chair on which they're seated should be comfortable and the environment inviting. Belmont chairs ticked all boxes in terms of aesthetics, comfort and durability.

As well as specialist paediatric care, there is a dedicated specialist orthodontic suite, a surgery set up for young patients with special needs, hygiene and endodontic care and maxillofacial surgery. The surgeries offer the option of treatment beds or the Belmont chairs, depending on age and requirement.

In the basement, the airy feel of the practice continues with each surgery cleverly lit with a faux window that has a jungle character peering in – creating an ambience of space and daylight, as well as remaining in keeping with the all-important element of fun.

But there is a serious side to all this fun. Happy Kids Dental also has motivational and interactive dental-themed activities and the team offers not only an impressive range of services within an engaging environment, but also go out on the street to speak with

children and parents and into schools to engage and educate as well as entertain.

The design concept coupled with the team's 'whole body' approach to the wellbeing of its young patients is taking paediatric dentistry into a different realm. And any setting that eliminates fear and misunderstanding and helps children make positive associations with dentistry can only be a winner.

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Belmont

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