

# Space Management in Growing Children

Submitted by:

Mark H. Taylor, D.D.S.



**TAYLOR**  
... DENTISTRY ...  
Pediatric & General Dentistry

There are many situations in which the dentist can either prevent or reduce the severity of orthodontic issues in the developing dentition. If some of these strategies are not done, significant negative consequences can occur. Let's talk about a couple of these situations.

The first, and most common, is early loss of a baby tooth. If the permanent replacement tooth is not ready to come in, the teeth in the mouth typically start shifting to new positions. This shifting can result in a permanent tooth being blocked from coming into the normal position and causing a significant orthodontic problem.

This is an x-ray of a child who did not have a space maintainer placed after having a baby molar removed. The permanent molar moved into the space blocking out the normal eruption of the bicuspid. The lack of a simple space maintainer caused a poor fit of the permanent teeth and now necessitates comprehensive orthodontic intervention.



In the second case, a permanent cuspid is becoming impacted in the roof of the mouth. These situations can sometimes be treated by taking out a baby cuspid, which can influence the direction of eruption of the permanent cuspid. The first x-ray was taken in March of 2013. The cuspid is headed the wrong direction and is becoming impacted in the roof of the child's mouth. The baby cuspid was removed and the followup x-ray in January of 2014 shows that the permanent cuspid is now erupting in a better position. The tooth eventually erupted into a much more normal position. If nothing is done in these cases, most will result in an impacted cuspid, which requires lengthy, comprehensive braces.



There are many other situations in the growth and development of the child's dentition in which the dentist can prevent or lessen the severity of problems. In addition to checking for cavities and discussing prevention strategies, checking for growth and development issues is one more reason for children to have regular checkups.

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