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Bala Kids Dentistry

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Smiles from the Start



Dr. Sheedeh Madani, founder of **Bala Kids Dentistry**, helps children establish an early dental home in an environment of comfort, compassion, and positivity.

by **Erica Young**
photos by **Alison Dunlap**

AS WITH MOST THINGS IN LIFE, GOOD DENTAL HABITS BEGIN AT A YOUNG AGE. Conversely, a negative experience early on can lead to a lifelong aversion to the dentist and all the unwanted consequences that come with it.

At Bala Kids Dentistry, board-certified pediatric dentist Sheedeh Madani, D.M.D., M.S., has built a practice that combines child-centered expertise with exceptional care to help kids develop healthy habits that carry into adulthood. The practice specializes in the care of infants, children, young adults, and patients with special healthcare needs. As a mother to a young son of her own, Dr. Sheedeh understands the unique challenges that come with raising children.

This is why Bala Kids Dentistry focuses on positivity and achievable goals—not only for kids but also for their caregivers. Dr. Sheedeh explains, “We spend the early years focusing on building sustainable habits for a healthier future, and treat each patient with kindness and compassion as if they were a part of our own family.”

The kid-friendly experience starts the moment a patient walks through the door and enters the Smile Zone, a play area with iPads, books, games, toys, and movies. The office adheres to rigorous health and safety protocols, including negative-pressure ventilation and HEPA filtration. Each appointment takes place in an individual room, where Dr. Sheedeh and her team utilize “tell-show-do” techniques and desensitization approaches to comfort and educate patients, as well as their families.

If a child is hesitant, Dr. Sheedeh says, “we take the time to allow them to get familiar with the space and ask questions to build trust.” As one parent wrote in an online review, “Dr. [Sheedeh] and her team made my little girl so comfortable and proud of herself that she didn’t want to leave. She is so excited to go back for her checkup in six months.”

Leading-Edge Care

Dr. Sheedeh Madani grew up in the Philadelphia area, attending Friends’ Central School and receiving her undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania. After earning a Master’s in Biomedical Science at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, she returned to Penn for her dental doctorate, where she was awarded Certificates of Merit in both pediatric dentistry and oral medicine.



Her passion for working with children led her to specialize in pediatric dentistry at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia. Working in a hospital-based setting presented her with the opportunity to collaborate with other medical providers and laid a solid foundation for comprehensive pediatric care. Dr. Sheedeh then sought to put her education and clinical experience to good use for the betterment of her community. Thus, Bala Kids Dentistry was born.

Bala Kids Dentistry takes a personalized, gentle, and comprehensive approach. Dr. Sheedeh and her team emphasize cavity prevention and slowing down decay progression by using protective sealants and silver diamine fluoride. When dental issues do arise, however, her team combines their extensive training with meticulous preparation to deliver state-of-the-art care.

Treating Patients Like Family

Dr. Sheedeh genuinely loves helping children, and her warm personality sets the tone for the entire practice. She is kind, patient, wel-

coming, and adept at connecting with children at their level and putting them and their families at ease.

Dr. Sheedeh values every member of the team, most of whom have been with the practice for years, and all of whom share a common desire of treating patients like family. Shortly after opening, Dr. Sheedeh brought on Dustin Root, D.M.D., a fellow board-certified pediatric dentist, to add to the office's comforting familial energy.

"I've known [Dr. Root] for almost a decade, and he's amazing with the kids," Dr. Sheedeh says. "He's fun-loving and a great energy to have in the office, and caregivers enjoy the option of having a male or female provider for their kids."

As one parent put it, "This is an exceptional children's dental practice. My kids always have a very positive experience here, which is due to the high level of care from the staff, taking the time to address them by their names, and explaining everything in detail to help with their nerves. It's a gift to be able to create and maintain positive associations with

doctors' offices for any child, and Dr. [Sheedeh], Dr. Root and the entire staff at Bala Kids Dentistry do so wonderfully."

In Dr. Sheedeh's case, "family" is not just figurative. She has always been close with her brother, Dr. Reza Madani, a local pediatrician in practice for over 10 years. She now considers herself deeply fortunate to collaborate with him on their many mutual patients and to consult with him and his colleagues as needed.

Where to Begin

Some are unsure of when to take their child to the dentist for the first time. Dr. Sheedeh suggests that an introductory visit should take place after a child's first tooth appears, or by the age of one, to help make the child comfortable for future visits and to establish a dental home.

Dr. Sheedeh understands the hesitation about a first visit, because a child may not tolerate sitting through an appointment. She emphasizes that this is expected and understood, and is why Bala Kids Dentistry offers a "knee-to-knee exam," during which the patient sits on their caregiver's lap through the exam.

"We can discuss concerns and share information that will help with education and patient care," she adds. "At these early visits, we gather information on medical history; talk about brushing, cavities, bottle feedings, and pacifiers; and establish a baseline to build from."

After all, the early years are about creating good habits, not perfection.

Dr. Sheedeh and her team help families advocate for their children through early preventative care. Early care also includes screening for sleep apnea, throat obstructions, and tongue ties, as well as providing appropriate referrals.

Dr. Sheedeh's mission at Bala Kids Dentistry remains the same as the day she founded the practice: "I want to give kids a dental office experience where they feel at home and look forward to returning. My goal is to instill a positive attitude toward dentistry in the minds of our young patients and their families that will last a lifetime." ■



The Bala Kids Dentistry team includes (top row, left to right) Ashley Ponce, Lauren Wallen, Alex Waxman, Dr. Sheedeh Madani, Lisa Waxman, Semajé Harper, Citlali Victoria Peña, (bottom row, left to right) Aniyah Williams, Francesca Franzzo, and Vanessa Lopez. Not pictured: Dr. Dustin Root, Nicole Lozada, Becca DeOrio, Zulay Reyes, and Tahirah Riddick.

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