

My thumb plan

A chart to fill in together. A star or sticker for each good day or good night. Slips are part of the process: start again the next day.

My goal:				My reward:			
	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Week 1	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
Week 2	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
Week 3	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
Week 4	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

The goal stretches: 1 night → 1 week → 1 month

For parents: a gentle plan in five steps

- 1. Choose the right moment:** a calm period, not during a move or a new school year.
- 2. Talk about it together,** without blame. A picture book helps; the dentist can be an ally.
- 3. Notice the thumb moments:** tiredness, boredom, screens, the car, bedtime.
- 4. A discreet signal and busy hands:** a gesture just for you two, a stuffed animal, a squeeze ball.
- 5. Encourage rather than monitor:** a star for each success, no criticism or constant reminders.

At night

- Daytime first, then nights
- Story, cuddle, stuffed animal to hold
- A glove or sock, if your child agrees
- If they become afraid or tense, stop
- Be patient: up to 3 months for some

Avoid

- Scolding, shaming, comparing
- Pulling the thumb out in front of others
- Announcing the plan without their agreement

Who to see

- **Dentist:** teeth and bite (in Québec, RAMQ covers the exam under 10)
- **Orthodontist:** whether an appliance is needed
- **Speech-language pathologist:** tongue between the teeth, swallowing, a lisp that lasts
- **Doctor:** mouth often open, snoring, blocked nose

Sources: Canadian Paediatric Society; INSPQ (2026); Naître et grandir (2021); AAPD (2024); Healthwise (2026). General information: this chart does not replace an assessment.