

LOCALLY OWNED

TOOTH BE TOLD

Photography by Heather Christensen



**THIS PEDIATRIC DENTIST IS MAKING IT EASY FOR
KIDS TO BRUSH, FLOSS AND SMILE**

ASK ANY KID IF THEY WANT TO GO TO THE DENTIST—YOU’LL MOST LIKELY GET AN UNHAPPY, GRUMBLY, PETRIFIED RESPONSE. But ask a kid to visit Dr. Lauren Capozza at Loveland Pediatric Dentistry? You’re sure to get the opposite.

That’s because Dr. Capozza’s practice isn’t your typical children’s dentistry practice.

Walk inside and you’ll immediately notice why. With wall murals painted by a local art teacher, child-size Amish Adirondack chairs in the lobby, a Loveland bike-themed exam room and a chalk wall for drawing while parents check out, Dr. Capozza has thought of it all.

And we’d be totally remiss if we didn’t mention the sensory room—designed specifically for patients who are too young or unable to cooperate due to special medical needs. An oversized beanbag and dimmable lights provide a non-threatening, alternative environment to the often-feared dental chair. While all potential triggers for those with sensory issues can’t be eliminated, Dr. Capozza’s goal is to eliminate the biggest one.

Other differentiators for LPD include allowing parents to accompany their children during procedures, providing a variety of sedation options and a free first exam for children under 24 months—ensuring their dental journey begins on the best preventative front.

At its core, LPD offers routine dental care to children ages 0-21, as well as pediatric specialty services. Dr. Capozza takes children’s teeth seriously—beyond what was taught in dental school for her certificate in pediatric dentistry, she received an additional two years of training in growth and development, child behavior, special needs, sedation services and treatment of baby teeth issues at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. She’s also board certified in her field and has been a licensed dentist for 8.5 years. Dr. Capozza continues to teach pediatric dentistry to residents at Children’s—giving back to the educational community and mentoring those who are starting practices of their own.

“Most parents tell us that they grew up afraid of the dentist,” Dr. Capozza says. “It’s hard for them to believe that their children can grow up loving to come to the dentist! But really, it’s all about attitude. We’re overjoyed to see kids at each visit and make sure they know they are important to us. We have a huge prize wall—backpacks, T-shirts, water bottles—that they can see when they enter ... they know their cooperation will be rewarded in the end. We praise every successful behavior so they feel proud when they leave.”

Perhaps that’s why Dr. Capozza became a dentist in the first place. After shadowing a dentist and orthodontist in middle school, she was hooked.

“Pediatric dentistry is so fun,” Dr. Capozza says. “Kids come in excited to earn a prize and new toothbrush, look at our fun décor and watch TV on the ceiling. Not only do we want them to leave with a smile, but as staff, we want to enjoy life and spend most of our day smiling as well. We want our patients to have healthy smiles—so they can spread joy around the community.”



*Dr. Lauren Capozza
Photography by Heather Christensen*



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Opening in the midst of a global pandemic meant designing the practice with precautions at the forefront. LPD is completely paperless, schedules are designed to keep families in separate areas, and Dr. Capozza often communicates with patients via phone or text to determine if coming into the office is absolutely necessary.

“Loveland previously did not have a pediatric dentist,” Dr. Capozza says. “The COVID-19 shutdown of dentistry resulted in thousands of kids being delayed with dental treatment. As a new office, we’ve been able to get children in quickly, often same day, for emergency care they’ve been needing since before March.”

TIPS FROM THE TOOTH EXPERT

Ensuring children and parents take care of maturing teeth is of utmost importance to Dr. Capozza. She offers several recommendations:

- ✦ Consider bringing your child to the dentist for an exam as early as one year old.
- ✦ Start brushing a baby’s teeth at bedtime as soon as they have teeth. You can use a tiny smear (no bigger than a grain of rice) of fluoride-containing children’s toothpaste.
- ✦ Begin flossing baby teeth once per day as soon as any teeth are touching—plastic flossers can make it much easier.
- ✦ Half of children have cavities by kindergarten—and most of these cavities are hidden between the back teeth. Parents should help their children brush and floss their teeth at bedtime until they are able to tie their own shoes and cut their own meat.
- ✦ Tradition says to brush for two minutes (try playing your child’s favorite song while they brush). Help them establish a routine to consistently get all areas every time using small circular hand motions.
- ✦ Replace a toothbrush any time it starts to show signs of wear and any time after recovering from an illness.
- ✦ Don’t use any fluoride-containing mouthwashes until children are 6 or older.



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“WE’RE A SMALL BUSINESS RUN BY A LOCAL MOM—NOT A CORPORATION OR LARGER ORGANIZATION. AS A MOM, I MAKE EVERY DECISION FOR A PATIENT BASED ON THE QUESTION, ‘WHAT WOULD I WANT FOR MY OWN CHILD?’ THAT DRIVES EVERY DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION I MAKE. HAVING CHILDREN OF MY OWN HELPS ME EMPATHIZE WITH PARENTS AND DESIGN AN EXPERIENCE THAT MAKES TODAY’S PARENT VERY COMFORTABLE. NO PARENT-SHAMING HERE—JUST COMPASSIONATE EDUCATION AND SOLUTIONS FOR WHATEVER YOUR CHILD NEEDS.”

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