



ORTHO2

Observation Patients

Keeping Them in the Fold

by **Nancy Hyman**

It is very disappointing to spend your valuable time and resources guiding a young future patient through the pre-treatment observation phase only to have the parent declare, "I am going to shop around now that Amber is ready for braces!" A vibrant Kids Club program will create loyalty for both the parent and child when the time comes for selecting an orthodontist. The following four key steps will produce an enthusiastic group of pre-treatment patients ready to tell Mom and Dad who their first choice is!

Step 1: Qualify Membership

Select a Kids Club Coordinator and determine qualifications for enrollment. The Kids Club Coordinator does not need to be the Treatment Coordinator. In several of my clients' practices, clinical or front office team members share the duties. One team member can lead the charge with backup when necessary.

Qualified future patients may include all observation patients with kept or unkept appointments. Patients designated for observation but who do not have an appointment can also be included in the Kids Club. Siblings of active patients not yet seen for an initial exam may also be included.

To gather participants select a time period of 18–24 months. For example, if you start your program on June 1, 2013, contact all eligible Kids Club children and their parents from your observation files dating back to January 1, 2012.

Children over the age of 12 are not part of the Kids Club. If your research of observation patients reaps children over age 12, call and e-mail for an appointment to determine if the child is ready for treatment. For this category remove any children who have opted for treatment elsewhere, moved, or are no longer interested in pursuing treatment. You will also apply this standard when refining the list of children under 12.

Step 2: Determine Promotions

Each Kids Club member and parent will be mailed and e-mailed an announcement. Put a sticker on the front of the envelope to catch the recipient's interest. For example, Kids Club Membership Benefits...Details Enclosed!

Each Kids Club member will receive:

- A practice T-shirt at the first appointment.
- A \$5 gift card at each subsequent observation appointment.
- An entry into a bi-monthly drawing. Winners are selected bi-monthly and Kids Club members will enter the contest at the observation appointment.

Please note: the T-shirt is a BIG hit with the younger set. If you currently give practice T-shirts to all patients consider also offering to Kids Club members, and either continue or discontinue offering to initial banding patients.

Step 3: Contact and Promote

In addition to the letter and e-mail to eligible participants, call parents of all unappointed Kids Club children to explain the program benefits and schedule an observation appointment.

Be sure to give Kids Club members strong visibility in your practice. Post photos of members wearing T-shirts on a bulletin board. You may also post the photos on a television screen interspersed with other announcements and practice facts. I recommend the Kaleidoscope system for this purpose. (www.thekaleidoscope.com)

Step 4: Continuous Implementation

All initial exam patients placed in observation by the doctor will become Kids Club members. The Treatment

Reprinted from

The Newsletter for Members and Friends of Ortho2
July 2013 - Volume 31 Issue 3

About the Author

Coordinator will explain the benefits and give the parent and child supporting material for review at home. The child will receive the practice T-shirt and have his/her photo taken. Be sure to explain the benefit of the next observation appointment and book the appointment at the exam. Eliminate last minute rescheduling of the next observation appointment by phoning and e-mailing the parent the month prior to the appointment to reconfirm.

Create increased patient enrollment for this segment of your potential patient pool with a systematic approach, appealing to appreciative parents, and winning over enthusiastic children. Make your practice the only choice when the child is ready to start treatment. A comprehensive Kids Club program will provide the parent and child with a clear snapshot of your practice and all its wonderful services. ♡



Nancy Hyman shares her practice growth program as founder of Ortho Referral Systems. She has helped many orthodontic practices jump-start patient referrals, increase case acceptance, and improve implementation of practice growth systems.