Putting kids first

By Robert Selleck, today Staff

Paul Casamassimo, DDS, the director of the AAPD’s Health Policy Center, succinctly sums up the unique way AAPD serves its membership: It puts them second. “Much of what our organization has accomplished has happened because we’re fine with putting children ahead of our own profession,” Casamassimo said Friday during a break from visiting with members in the AAPD Bookstore in the exhibit hall. Casamassimo quickly listed several once-controversial oral-health guidelines for infants and

These Mouth Monsters are wondering what you think

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Have you met Tartar the Terrible, Tooth D.K. and Ginger Bite-Us? If you have, what do you think of them? Are you putting them to use in your practice?

AAPD staff is interested in getting your opinion about the effectiveness of the Monster-Free Mouths Movement educational campaign that launched last year — and would like to gauge interest in various support products available in conjunction with the campaign. If you have a minute this morning, stop by the AAPD Bookstore in the exhibit hall, booth No. 517, to offer your thoughts and answer a few survey questions about the campaign.

Mark Urbach, DDS, in practice with his son in Houston, came straight to the point in the booth Saturday: “I love the Mouth Monsters. It’s exactly what we were looking for. We’re using it in our office big time.”

Jennifer Culley, DMD, with Dentistry for Special People in Cherry Hills, N.J., had a similar opinion. “Kids love them,” she said. “It makes it easier to talk with them. They’re fun. They’re a good tool.”

The primary intent of the campaign is to work toward ending tooth decay’s status as the No. 1 chronic infectious disease among children in the United States. The main components are education and fun.

Anchoring the effort is www.MyChildrensTeeth.org, which is filled with tips and tools that can be used to teach children about teeth in a way that gets their attention.
children that were long-advocated by AAPD but slow to be embraced by other dental organizations despite the evidence backing the recommendations.

“What was once in askance is now universally accepted as the standard,” Casamassimo said. “We’re very proud of that as an organization. The accomplishments reflect where we direct our energy: No. 1 is advocacy for children. No. 2 is to serve our membership.”

The philosophy works, apparently, because so many member dentists embrace the same perspective with their own business models.

The scientific program at this year’s AAPD annual session further confirms the perspective, with wide-ranging topics focused on improving oral health for all children.

The philosophy is reflected throughout the exhibit hall, too, with countless products and services directed primarily toward improving patients’ comfort and care—with practice efficiencies and profitability typically referenced as secondary benefits.

Examples are endless. Isolite, in booth No. 810, is here with its recently launched “extra-small” mouthpiece for its dental-isolation system, complementing the five other existing sizes, which already included “pediatric” and “small.” Many dentists find younger patients far more receptive to the system than traditional isolation methods.

NuSmile, in booth No. 405, a leader in esthetic pediatric crown advancements, continues to innovate with products focused on patient success and comfort.

StarBright, a relatively new varnish from Nanova Biomaterials, in booth No. 933, is gaining fans with its flavored sodium fluoride varnish because young patients are able to brush normally just four hours after application, instead of having to wait as long as 24 hours. Baby Buddy, in booth No. 925, has an oral-care program for children from birth through age 12 and beyond, with different systems at every stage of development.

Every row of the exhibit hall features plenty of other products and services reflecting their founders’ commitment to children’s oral health. And there is still more time today to explore, with the exhibit hall open from 9 a.m. to noon.