[0015] The invention is electronic and will have an ON/OFF switch that in some configurations will be integrated with the character. So, for example, if the invention is configured as a bunny, the child might pull an ear or squeeze a paw to turn on the invention. If the invention is configured as a superhero, the child might shake the characters hand to turn on the invention.

[0016] It is an object of the invention to provide a dental hygiene tutorial toy that provides dental hygiene instruction and information. To that end, the invention contains an internal sound generating device which contains a series of prerecorded dental hygiene messages that instruct children in a variety of proper dental hygiene practices such as proper brushing, the need for flossing, the proper use of mouth washes, and other age appropriate dental care information.

[0017] It is a further object of the invention to provide a device that instructs children on the proper length of time to thoroughly brush their teeth. Pediatric dentists recommend that children brush for at least two minutes. The present invention, therefore, includes an integrated timing device to notify the child that they have brushed for the appropriate length of time.

[0018] As most parents and guardians know, it is often difficult to convince children to brush for the required two minutes. Therefore it is a further object of the invention to provide encouragement to brush for the appropriate time. To accomplish this there is provided, in addition to the incorporated timer and prerecorded dental hygiene instruction, a variety of encouraging messages and other sounds, including music and songs. Encouraging messages can include such words and phrases as "way to go" and "keep on brushing" as well as many other things. Other forms of encouragement can include music or songs, both to encourage and distract the child so that they will not become bored during brushing. It is well known that children are often stimulated by music, and it is an object of the invention to provide a variety of music to stimulate and encourage the child to stay on the task of brushing their teeth. Other forms of encouraging sounds include, but are not limited to, cheering and crowd noises.

[0019] It is within the conception of the present invention that the sound generating device might also include a recording feature so that a parent, guardian, or other familiar adult might record the dental hygiene instruction or encouraging patter.

[0020] In various embodiments of the invention, the dental hygiene tutorial toy might also include an integrated toothbrush, toothpaste, or drinking cup holder. In one embodiment, these holders might be incorporated in a base upon which the character portion of the dental hygiene tutorial toy sits. In another embodiment of the invention these holders would be incorporated with the character, so for example, a toothbrush holder might be in the hand of the character, giving the appearance that the character is offering the child the toothbrush, thus further encouraging the child to brush.

[0021] In alternate embodiments of the invention the power switch would be incorporated with the toothbrush or toothpaste holder so that the device would be activated when the child takes the toothbrush or toothpaste from the holder. This could also be achieved in alternate embodiments by a light or motion sensitive switch to activate the device. When activated, the device would begin with instruction, such as "make sure to use toothpaste" and "only a pea sized drop is needed" and encouragement, such as "lets get ready to brush." Then the timer would start, and the device would produce instruction and encouragement during the duration of brushing.

[0022] The sound generating device will also contain a randomizer to randomly generate the messages and encouraging sounds and music. This will ensure that the child receive a variety of instruction as well as ensure that the use of the device does not become rote and the child become bored.

[0023] The dental hygiene tutorial toy disclosed herein is intended for use on a bathroom countertop or other surface near where children brush their teeth. It is an object of the invention, therefore, that the device be durable, water proof or essentially water proof, easily portable, and designed with no small or easily removable parts that might create a choking hazard.

[0024] These and other aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] For a fuller understanding of the nature and objects of the invention, reference should be had to the following detailed description, taken in connection with the following drawings.

[0026] FIG. **1** is a front perspective view of a representative embodiment of the disclosed invention.

[0027] FIG. **2** is back elevation view showing a schematic representation of the sound generator and related elements.

[0028] FIG. **3** is a back elevation view showing the access panel.

[0029] FIG. **4** is a perspective view of a representative embodiment of the invention including a base, and toothbrush and drinking cup holder.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0030] Detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein. It is to be understood, however, that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention and that the invention may be embodied in various and alternative forms. Therefore, specified structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limitations, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention.

[0031] FIG. **1** shows a representative embodiment of the disclosed dental hygiene tutorial toy. The invention is comprised of a body **10**. In this representative embodiment, the body **10** is depicted as a bear. The body **10** of the invention can be any configuration that is visually appealing to children, such as any variety of animals, teddy bears, cartoon characters, and television and movie characters, whether real or animated. In the representative embodiment depicted in