

Biting Policy

A child biting other children is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors in group child care. It can occur without warning, is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the parents, and the caregivers involved. Biting is developmentally appropriate among infant, toddlers and two year olds and is considered a normal phase that many children experience and will eventually outgrow. Although it is developmentally appropriate, it is an unwanted behavior that can result in injury.

Reasons children bite:

- Tender sore and swollen gums from teething
- Signs of being hungry or tired
- Seeking attention
- Exploring their environment orally (young children learn by putting everything in their mouth)
- Cause and effect (if I bite he will drop the toy I want)
- Act of self-defense
- Express feelings of frustration, anger, over excitement and fear (you are too close)
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Biting prevention

- Provide a daily schedule that offers a predictable, consistent routine.
- Provide additional supervision as available to the biting child to prevent attempts/bites.
- Plan and implement age appropriate activities that allow children to be active and release energy.
- Use positive guidance techniques to reinforce appropriate behavior and encourage self-control
- Provide items to bite: teethers, cold wash cloths and crunchy foods.
- "Shadow" child as much as possible to prevent bites/attempts

Steps taken when a child bites:

1. Teacher will address the biting child immediately using a calm, firm voice, saying "No biting. Biting hurts!"
2. Child will be moved to an area secluding them from the bitten child and other children without any emotion that may encourage the behavior while bitten child is being cared for.
3. Child may observe loving attention being given to injured child
4. Teacher will reiterate "biting hurts. We don't bite friends, we bite food."
5. Child will be redirected to another activity away from others.
6. An incident report will be written detailing the event.
7. Parents will be notified.

Steps for the child that was bitten:

1. Teacher will comfort the injured child and use empathetic language "Ouch, I'm sorry you got bit. Biting hurts. I'm sorry you're hurting."
2. Ice will be applied to the bite and if the skin is broken it will be washed with soap and water.
3. An incident report will be written detailing the event.
4. Parents will be notified.

If biting continues:

1. Teachers will meet with center Director to discuss perceived reasons for biting and develop a plan of action.
2. The biting child will be shadowed to dissuade additional bites.
3. Children will be separated into smaller groups when staffing permits and/or re-directed so child can play independently.
4. Consideration will be made to transition child to next class if age appropriate (often children will not attempt to bite those “bigger” than themselves.)
5. Parents and teachers will partner together to communicate daily.
6. Prepare parents of possibility of temporary dis-enrollment.
7. If deemed in the best interest of the child, other children or school, the child will be disenrolled until the biting period has ceased.

Our goal is to provide an environment that addresses the needs of all children in a loving, supportive manner, while having an understanding of developmental milestones. Although biting is a upsetting behavior, we hope together with education and patience we can all be understanding as the children work through this difficult phase. I am always available to share my experience with you and more importantly listen to your concerns. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Your signature below acknowledges that you have read and understand the KAW biting policy.

Parent's name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____