

BITING POLICY

July 2019

Purpose

Biting is an almost inevitable part of life for children in child care. As you will have noticed, young children explore their world with their mouth and biting is a natural extension of that process. For children under three years the urge to bite arises from this natural curiosity and it can also be linked to feelings of stress, frustration and excitement.

Strategies

Procedure for biting incident:

1. Be calm, maintain a calm and controlled voice, remove the biting child from the situation and tell them firmly 'Teeth are not for biting. Biting hurts'.
2. Take care of the child who has been bitten first, calm the child with cuddles and kind words and clean the bite area with water and an ice pack.
3. Once the victim is feeling better approach the child who did the biting and explain the effect of the biting. Encourage the biter to apologise to the victim and comfort them with cuddling and/or gentle strokes.
4. If the biter is old enough ask them to suggest ways, they could avoid biting in the future and give them strategies for dealing with stressful or frustrating situations.

Knowing what triggers, a child from things that annoy them or cause them to get frustrated helps deflect from biting.

A child might bite to:

- Relieve pain from teething.
- Explore cause and effect ("What happens when I bite?").
- Experience the sensation of biting.
- Satisfy a need for oral-motor stimulation.
- Imitate other children and adults.
- Feel strong and in control.
- Get attention.
- Act in self-defence.
- Communicate needs and desires, such as hunger or fatigue.
- Communicate or express difficult feelings, such as frustration, anger, confusion, or fear ("There are too many people here and I feel cramped").

Responsibilities of the Approved Provider

Ensure this policy is understood by all educators.

Responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

Ensure this policy is understood by all educators.

If you are concerned about the biting habits of the child, make sure to speak with the parents about it. The last thing you want is upset parents that their child keeps getting bitten. If you think that a professional opinion is needed particularly for older children, ask the parents whether they are happy to seek that help. Sometimes there could be some underlying issues causing the child to bite such as Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD).

Responsibilities of the Educators

Positively managing biting

For some general ideas on how to manage a biting child consider employing some of the tactics listed below:

- Encourage the use of words and teach children to practice saying 'Stop, I don't like it' when they have their toy taken or when they are frustrated by something.
- If possible, observe the child who bites closely for a day and provide suggestions for how to manage situations where the child might bite for example 'Why don't you play with this toy while Melissa is playing with that one'.
- Take note of who the biter usually bites and when the biter is biting. When the biter approaches a child step in to make sure the situation is kept under control and teach the victim to be assertive and say, 'Teeth are not for biting' or "Stop" if they are younger.
- Make sure the biter has enough personal space and help them find a peaceful corner to do something quiet if you spot any behaviour which might lead to biting.

When children do bite

As mentioned at the beginning of this policy, no matter how proactive you are about preventing biting there is still a good chance that children will bite or be bitten when they are in a group environment. When this does happen follow the procedure outlined below.

Responsibilities of the Families

- While biting is extremely stressful for everyone involved it is an almost inevitable part of life for children in group situations. Give guidance to the child as much as possible on what teeth are used for.
- Playing pretend biting games with young children is not recommended as children may try and "play" with one of their friends and bite too hard. We want to discourage this as much as possible.
- There are books available that do talk about biting so if the child is a frequent biter, purchasing some of these resources may help with educating your child on biting others.
- There are a variety of things that families can do to prevent biting. I helps to not 'bite back'
- Have age-appropriate expectations for your child's behaviour based on his or her current skills and abilities.
- Make sure your child's schedule, routines, and transitions are predictable and consistent. At meal and bedtimes, try to do things in the same way and at the same times. Young children thrive when they know what will happen next.
- Offer activities and materials that allow your child to relax and release tension. Some children like yoga or deep breathing. Offer playdough, foam balls, bubbles, soft music, and other stress-reducing items.
- Use positive guidance strategies to help your child develop self-control. For example, offer gentle reminders, phrased in a way that tells them what behaviours are expected. "Be sure to hang up

your coat on the hook.” “You can each have a bucket to use in the sandbox.” “Put a small dot of toothpaste on your brush. You won’t need much to get your teeth clean.”

- Provide items to bite, such as teething rings or clean, wet, cold washcloths stored in the refrigerator. This helps children learn what they can bite safely, without hurting anyone else.

If biting becomes a habit for your child and ongoing positive guidance is not effective, it is time to set up a meeting with your child’s educators. Together, you can plan an approach for addressing the behaviour that can be applied consistently at home and at the service. Together, you can discuss and define the behaviour and find the cause behind it. Next, you and the educators can develop a plan to address the causes and help your child to replace biting with acceptable behaviours. Try the plan for several weeks but be patient. It takes time to change behaviours that have become habits. Keep in touch with your child’s educators to share information about changes in behaviour. After several weeks, evaluate the plan’s effectiveness and make changes as needed.

Related Statutory Obligations & Considerations

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Department of Education - <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care>

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) - [http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-](http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf)

http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

Education and Care Services National Regulations (Children (Education and Care Services)

National Law (NSW) <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

National Quality Framework (NQF) - <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/>

United Nations Convention on the rights of the child - <https://www.unicef.org.au/>

Related Telephone Numbers

- Early Childhood Directorate – 1800 619 113

Amendment History

Date	Amendment	Notes of amendment
14.11.18	- Policy Created	
8.7.19	- Reviewed, no changes made	

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Date:	8 th July 2019
Last Amended By:	Kylie Showman
Next Review:	December 2020
Position:	Director / Nominated Supervisor

Table on Reasons for Biting as on Careforkids.com.au website

Reason for biting	Possible solution
Teething	<p>Provide a wide range of chewable toys and teething rings for the child to bite on. Make sure to disinfect them and wash them if possible before using with another child.</p> <p>Offer hard food such as rusks and soothing foods such as cold apple wrapped in muslin to satisfy the child's urge to bite.</p>
Natural curiosity/exploration	<p>Remove the child quickly from whatever it is they are biting and say 'Teeth are not for biting! Biting hurts!'</p> <p>Make sure the child understands that biting is not a game.</p> <p>Help the child understand the difference between things that are okay to bite and those that are not okay to bite.</p>
Excitement	<p>Remove the child quickly from whatever it is they are biting and say 'Teeth are not for biting! Biting hurts!'</p> <p>Teach the child gentle ways of showing affection and excitement such as cuddling and stroking.</p>
Frustration	<p>Where possible avoid situations that the child might find frustrating and/or intervene if you see them becoming frustrated.</p> <p>Monitor the child when they are playing with other children. Try and keep group play sessions short and step in and distract the children if they both want the same toy.</p> <p>If a child is bitten, say 'Teeth are not for biting! Biting hurts!' remove the child and do not return him or her to the play situation. Attend to the child who has been bitten.</p> <p>Take some time to talk to the child after the biting has occurred and explain why they should not bite. Tell them you understand the reasoning for doing it (frustration, excitement) and if age appropriate give them some alternative ways of dealing with their frustration.</p>

<p>Attention seeking</p>	<p>In group situations ensure you give the child plenty of one-on-one attention wherever possible.</p> <p>In group situations try and get in to the habit of maintaining contact with the child by answering their questions and showing enthusiasm when they want to show you a particular toy or drawing etc.</p> <p>If biting does occur, calmly remove the child from the situation say clearly and firmly 'Teeth are not for biting! Biting hurts' if possible, leave them with another adult while you attend to the child who has been bitten.</p> <p>It is important not to react too loudly or strongly in situations like this because the child will have got the attention they are seeking, even though it is negative.</p>
<p>Powerlessness</p>	<p>Younger/smaller children often feel overwhelmed in groups or when they are surrounded by older children and may bite as a way of gaining some control of the situation.</p> <p>Be mindful of this and make sure the younger children in the group have their needs met so they don't feel the urge to bite.</p> <p>Explain to the older children in the group how the younger children might be feeling and encourage them to play equal.</p> <p>If necessary make separate play places for older and younger children to ensure everyone enjoys their playtime.</p>
<p>Stress</p>	<p>Try and identify what is causing the child to be stressed and be mindful of events which are likely to cause stress.</p> <p>It might not be possible to remove the child's stress however you can help the child find ways to deal with their stress such as through energetic play and stories.</p> <p>If biting still occurs remove them from the situation and if it helps, offer them something else to bite on or possibly something to eat.</p> <p>Make sure you offer lots of love, cuddles and support to help the child manage their stress.</p>