



Creative World Developmental Information Booklet | Biting

Understanding Biting

The first years are exciting years. At no other time in your child's life will they experience as many developmental milestones in such a short period of time as they do in the first two years of life. As a new parent, it is a rewarding and challenging time. Most developmental moments are a cause for celebration. A few, such as biting, even though it is a developmental stage, are often not talked about and can be overwhelming and scary. Biting happens for different reasons with different children. Not all children will go through this stage, but it's virtually unavoidable when children are in an early childhood program.

There are many different reasons toddlers bite. They bite to explore, to get reactions and because they lack language and social skills to communicate their wants and frustrations. Unfortunately, there are no magic solutions for preventing biting. It is especially complicated when children are biting for different reasons and when they imitate what they learn from friends.

How We Prevent Biting

We are committed to working with children and their families when biting occurs in the classroom. Here are some of the ways that we have structured our classroom, and some of the strategies that we use to prevent this behavior:

- Our classrooms are designed to provide young children with a safe and nurturing environment. Careful consideration has been given in establishing routines, the classroom schedule, room arrangement, and transitions between activities.
- Our curriculum is age appropriate. Our activities are designed to appeal to the child's developmental level and attention span. We provide a rich variety of activities that are individualized to meet children's needs.
- Teachers help children develop positive ways of interacting and communicating. They model and verbalize appropriate behaviors for toddlers to help them learn age-appropriate ways to interact and communicate with each other.
- Teachers show their approval when children use appropriate ways of interacting and communicating with each other. They will reinforce the use of gentle touches, use of words to describe feelings, and compassion for others.
- Teachers take special care to "shadow" a child who has bitten. This will help the children resolve conflicts before a biting occurs through redirection and or role modeling appropriate negotiation techniques.
- Each time a bite occurs, an Incident/Accident Report will be completed on both children and their parents notified. Names of those involved will not be shared with parents to preserve the confidentiality of each of the children.

Tracking Biting

A “Biting Occurrence Report” will be completed by the teachers to take a close look at what was occurring in the classroom at the time of the bite. This report is designed to help teachers understand why a child might have bitten and may detect patterns that will be helpful in deterring future biting.

Because the Biting Occurrence report uses names of both children involved, the actual report it is not shared with parents. The information gained from the study is often very useful and is used when conferencing with parents to create an action plan to help a child move through the biting phase.

How You Can Help

Parents and teachers must work together as a team to problem solve and respond to biting.

Parents are asked to support teachers by helping identify why their child might be biting.

- Have they attempted to bite anyone in the home?
- How was it handled?
- Is the classroom the only experience their child has with children their own age?

Parents can help by communicating with the teachers any information about their child that might influence them during the day. For instance, if they had a change in their normal routine at home, a late night, woke several times in the night, had an over-exciting or stressful event occur, teething pain, etc.

Parents can also help by encouraging their child to use gentle touches and verbalizing their feelings. Parents should never bite their child or punish them for a bite that happens earlier in the day.

Support and Making A Plan

The most challenging aspect of establishing a biting policy for young children is there are so many different reasons why biting occurs. Bites can occur in a classroom once every six weeks by a different child for a different reason each time, or can occur more frequently by one child. Creative World is committed to providing your child and family with guidance during this phase of development. If a child is experiencing frequent biting, a conference will be held with the parents and an action plan put in place. Parents will be informed that if the biting continues, Creative World feels that a break in their daily routine may help. If a child bites more than twice in one day, two days in a row, or three times in a five day period their parents will be called and asked to pick up their child. If a child is sent home a second time they will be asked to find alternate care for several days. A break of two weeks is sometimes necessary if the child returns and bites again. As this is a sensitive time for families, we appreciate your trust and patience as we respect the privacy of families and protect children from being stigmatized through this developmental phase.

Creative World is dedicated to providing your child with the best early childhood experience and partnering with you every step of the way. While biting can be a stressful phase, we believe that proactive policies and good communication can help us work towards a solution together.

If you require additional information or have any questions, please contact your Creative World Director.