



# A BIT OF A BITE

Biting happens in almost every preschool childcare facility that cares for young children (including Kidszone) and at home. To be successful in caring for toddlers and preschool aged kids we must:

1. recognise children's reasons for biting,
2. react appropriately, and
3. take the proper measures to prevent further incidents.
4. If biting is a frequent and recurring problem, we will ask the parents to join us in Kidszone to assist us with a joint plan.

## Why do young children bite?

1. Biting is a natural part of children's development!
2. Infants and toddlers put everything in their mouths. It feels good to bite and chew while you're teething.
3. Toddlers and young pre-schoolers don't have the verbal skills to fully express themselves.
4. Biting brings about a quick and dramatic response.
5. Children experience many emotions (positive and negative) that are difficult for them to express and, at times, control. These emotions can be caused by numerous things: over excitement, frustration, fatigue, fear of being separated from people they love, etc.
6. Kids that have delays in speaking may be frustrated and so may bite when they are unable to express or feel threatened and they are unable to issue a warning to other kids.

## What if I see someone biting?

Remember, biters are usually looking for help and/or attention. Expect that biting may occur at some time with every infant or toddler. Your task is to carefully and thoughtfully handle the situation, and move on, so as not to reward the child with your attention.

1. STOP the action. Say, "NO!"
2. Quickly assess the situation to determine the cause of the biting. Is the infant hungry or teething? Do I have something appropriate for the infant to chew on?
3. Attend to the child that was bitten. Clean the area with Savlon, apply cold compress if swollen, and comfort the child.
4. Talk to the biter. Tell the biter, "Biting hurts! Teeth are not for biting children. Teeth are for eating food." If you think the child bit for emotional reasons, you can say, "It's O.K. to be upset (mad, frustrated, excited, etc.), it's NOT O.K. to bite." Tell the child what he can do next time he experiences this emotion. (i.e. You can say 'My toy!!', You can call out my name and I will come help you, etc.)
5. If it is an older child, you can ask the child what a better solution might have been.
6. Redirect the child to another area. This may include putting them in a cot if it's a busy service and they are a repeat biter, it may mean feeding the child, putting her down for a nap, or involving her in another toy or activity with supervision. Stay with that child until she becomes involved in the new activity.
7. Finish the interaction on a positive note. Reassure the biter that he/she is still important to you and that you still care about him.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the church office on 011 523 7000 to speak to one of our Kidszone team.

*Adapted from KidsGrowth.com*