

## Biting

### What You Need To Know:

Biting is a **NORMAL** behavior or phase for most younger children.

Reasons for biting include:

- A child who cannot use words yet to communicate, a child who is teething, overtired, jealous, frustrated, mad, etc., or who just wants to see what happens when he/she bites, especially infants and younger toddlers, who may just be experimenting and exploring their world.

### If a child bites:

- say 'no' or 'no bite' firmly, but calmly
- give your attention to the child who was bitten
- move biter away from the other child and ignore him/her for a few moments
- help child learn what he/she can do instead—tell them words to use to say how they are feeling, show them how to ask for help, etc.

### What NOT to do:

- Don't overreact when a child bites—that can reinforce the biting because the child gets excited about the reaction he/she gets.
- Don't ask a parent to pick up the child after he/she bites—that can reinforce biting.
- Don't bite the child back, physically punish the child, yell at the child, or put anything in his/her mouth after biting.

### Steps to PREVENT biting:

- Stay close to the child or 'shadow' him/her for a few days. Be careful to do it in a way so that he/she doesn't notice the extra attention.
- Look for patterns: does it always happen at transitions, naptime, at 2:30, etc. Try to figure out the reason the child is biting.
- If a child is about to bite, try to intervene or distract the child and say 'no bite' firmly, but calmly.
- Remind the child not to bite.
- Provide praise and positive attention when the child isn't biting and is playing nicely.
- Keep to a good routine all day, including meals, naps, and playtime.

For more information or resources, talk to your child care consultant.

Adapted from About.com: pediatrics. By Vincent Iannelli, M.D.