



## **Biting Policy**

### **Aim**

To ensure that every child is safe while in our care.

### **Explanation:**

Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are still developing their language and social skills. It is usually a temporary behaviour.

### **Implementation:**

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it can be scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, because of pain, or intense desire for a toy, etc.

Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is generally not a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalised.

Our staff plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our procedure for handling a biting incident follows:

- Staff will refer to the following document to remind them of possible causes of biting in an effort to prevent further biting incidents to occur.  
[https://www.childdaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf](https://www.childdaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2017/05/When-Children-Bite.pdf)
- If the hurt child will allow it have biter hold cold pack as a consequence of the behaviour.
- The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The child is comforted, reinforce it is not OK for x to bite you
- We do not send children to sit down, (to think about what they've done etc)
- We do not force the child to say sorry. Staff can model. I am so sorry x hurt you. Facilitate a child to say sorry if they want to.
- A parent of the child who was bitten is given a courtesy phone call to inform them of the incident. A written incident report is given to the parents when they arrive that afternoon.
- A verbal report is given to the parent of the "biter" when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child must not be released or confirmed.



- We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for a pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behaviour.  
Issues to be considered and perhaps discussed with parents include:-  
Is the child teething? (If so and biting continues ask the parent to bring teething gel to reduce the child's discomfort).  
Does the child have an ear infection?  
Does the child need alternative communication tools to avoid frustration, such as signing or visuals?  
Does the child need words to express love, share etc as they see biting as "kissing"?
- We work with each "biting" child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- We make special efforts to protect potential victims.

### **How to handle biting**

#### Look for why.

- Some of the more common but forgotten causes of biting can include teething and having a sore mouth, needing the language for friendships and playing (Perhaps some mistake biting for kissing), too many children in a space, not enough resources, learned behaviour from having been bitten, and struggles for dominance.
  - If child may be teething - ask the family if they can provide something to chew on, if they will bring gel to rub on gums for pain relief, if you may use dummy as a preventative.
  - If language may be issue- model language of friendships, eg I like you, or I want to play with you. Give the child a suitable visual to give to another child when they want to play.
  - Overcrowding- ensure you are using space dividers well, 4 chairs or cushions means 4 chn in this space, look at design of you play space and the traffic areas. Do people have to constantly walk through a play space?
  - Not enough resources - gather, order or make more.

We try to make every effort to extinguish the behaviour quickly. Only after we feel we have made every effort to make the program work for the biting child do we consider asking a family to withdraw the child

This policy links to the following NQS:

National Quality Standards: 5.2.2, 2.3.1

See Appendix 1-national law (section) and National Regulations (regulation)