



Policy Document:

Biting.

Policy Document:



Biting.

Policy Statement

Biting is part of a normal developmental stage for young children and is a common behaviour for children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition which is most common between 13 and 24 months of age. However, biting can be painful and frightening for the child who has been bitten and also frightening for the child who bites. Because of the danger this behaviour represents to other children, repeated biting in a group or childcare setting cannot be tolerated and requires positive intervention on the part of both the staff and the parents. At the Meadows we follow our positive behaviour policy at all times.

Aim

The staff will maintain a close and constant supervision of the children at all times but due to the speed and randomness with which biting incidents often occur, it is not always possible to prevent these from happening. We aim to act quickly and efficiently when dealing with any case of biting.

Procedure

When a biting incident happens it is very scary, frustrating and stressful for children, parents and staff. It is also not helpful to apportion blame, 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, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behaviour that is often hard to stop because it does achieve results; the desired toy, excitement, or attention.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is as follows:

- The child who has been bitten will be the priority and should be comforted and given reassurance.
- The biter is immediately removed from the vicinity and told in age-appropriate terms that the behaviour is unkind and that it makes the other child and staff sad.
- Once the bitten child is calm, staff should check for any visual injury. The wound of the bitten child will be assessed and appropriate first aid action will be taken. If it is determined that there was blood exposure further steps may need to be taken as determined by the First Aider providing treatment.
- Staff should wear PPE when dealing with bodily fluids.
- The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.
- A report of the incident will be made in our accident book and the parents of both children will be notified of the incident as soon as possible in a sensitive manner.
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.
- We look at the context of each biting incident to see if a pattern can be identified, in an effort to prevent further biting behaviour. Key worker should complete an 'STARC' form to consider possible triggers for the behaviour.
- 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.
- If a child bites more than once, their key person will shadow them for as long as is felt appropriate both to protect potential victims and to try to understand why the biting is happening. A risk assessment should be considered if the behaviour persists.



Information Sheet: **Biting.**

A little bit about biting

Biting is a common problem.

Up to a quarter of all children will bite others at some stage, mostly between the ages of two and three. Biting occurs at different stages of children's development:

Four months (approx.): babies are starting to have their first teeth, which is the first stage of **biting**.

12 months up: young children will start to explore cause and effect this can involve biting.

At 28 or more months, toddlers may bite for a range of reasons such as to gain attention, gain power, frustration or imitating others.

What can I do?

For a younger child first explore the possibility that it may be due to teething.

If the child seems to bite when tired or hungry, you may want to look at your daily routine to be sure that s/he is getting enough sleep and nourishment.

For toddlers:

- Give minimal attention for negative behaviour such as biting.
- Ensure lots of positive praise, when they are playing nicely.
- Try to keep group play to short periods and small groups. Watch for situations where two children might want the same toy. It is not always possible to make very young children share. Toddlers do not necessarily have the skills to negotiate or understand another child's perspective.
- Speak to your child's carers at nursery to ensure a consistent approach at nursery and at home.

Where can I find out more?

Practical advice and tips are available on many parenting websites, such as

<http://www.madeformums.com/toddler-behaviour/8-ways-to-stop-your-toddler-biting/1752.html>

If the problem persists advice can also be gained from your Health visitor.

The book *Toddler Taming* also contains useful information, nursery has a copy available for loan.

Updated — January 2010 — Kim Ellis