



Peaceful Ways to Prevent Biting

MYTH

Infants bite to target a specific child and bite them on purpose to inflict hurt.

FACT

- Infants use biting as a means to soothe teething and explore their environment, which is a normal phase of development.
- At this stage, the purpose of biting is more of a way to explore sensory needs than it is a means to communicate emotions and needs.
- Excitement, overstimulation, and/or experimentation with cause and effect, may be triggers for an infant's biting behaviour.

MYTH

A stern approach is the best way to stop biting with toddlers.

FACT

- Toddlers use biting as a means to communicate emotions and needs which is a normal phase of development.
- Responding calmly and gently lowers the toddlers frustration and allows them to learn to communicate differently.
- At this age biting is a result of lagging skills while they learn new social, language, and self-control skills. Biting is typically a reactive behaviour in situations where they do not have the language to control an immediate conflict or stressful situation.

MYTH

Neurodivergent children bite for different reasons than neurotypical children.

FACT

- Preschoolers use biting as a means to control, defend, react or express emotion.
- All children bite for the same reasons such as exploring their environment or, releasing frustration or excitement.
- Biting may be a continued result of lagging skills while they learn new social, language, play skills and self-control.

MYTH

It is rare for school age children to bite.

FACT

School age children, like all children, can bite out of frustration or a sensory need as it relates to their developmental skill level.

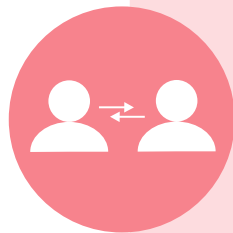
Move quickly, calmly and confidently when intervening between two children.
If you need to pick up the child, do it calmly and not out of anger.

Be mindful of your tone, facial expression, and body language.
They should display kindness and support.

Try the following based on developmental skill level and the child:



- Be patient
- Be playful
- Be loving
- Smile



- Sit close
- Hold the child close
- Engage in play
- Have multiples of the same toy



- Comment on what the child is trying to do
- Give positive attention when they are not biting
- Narrate what you would like them to do



- Label and validate emotions
- Provide things that the child can pull, bite, squish, eat, roll or drop.
- Have chewlery available



Be mindful of:

- Noise level and lighting
- Crowded play spaces

Use:

- Visuals
- Concrete Objects



Model language:

- “You’re frustrated”
- “You’re mad”
- “Go away”
- “Mine”
- “Want toy”
- “Help”