

Kid's Country Biting Policy

In even the best preschool settings, periodic outbreaks of biting occur among infants and toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. This is an unavoidable occurrence in groups of young children. When it happens, it can be very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. Understand that this is not an unusual phenomenon among children who are going through the oral stage of their development. 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, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, and attention. Children may be teething and biting may be a peasant sensation to a young child. Knowing that their biting will hurt another person is not yet part of a child's mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, that a teacher cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is as follows:

1. The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm "we do not bite". 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 biter is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, and then redirected.
2. A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of the biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
3. We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for patterns, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
4. We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
5. We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
6. We make special efforts to protect potential biting victims.

We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to family of the biting child to that of other families. Only after we feel we have made and exhausted every effort to make the program work for the biting child, would we consider asking the family to withdraw the child.