



BITING: FINDING THE RIGHT RESPONSE

Guide for Families

Understanding Why Toddlers Bite

Even when biting seems random, it often stems from unmet needs or emotional responses.

Common reasons include:

- Limited language to express frustration or excitement
- Overstimulation or sensory seeking
- Teething or oral-motor needs
- Desire for attention or control
- Difficulty with transitions or changes in routine

What Can I Do When My Child Bites?



Use short, clear communication, remain calm, and consistent

- “We don’t bite” or “Biting hurts.”
- Ensure all loved ones and caregivers are using the same responses.



Predictability and Routine

- Keep meals, naps, and playtimes predictable. Share this with your child’s teachers to align schedules



Offer safe alternatives

- Teethers, cold washcloths, or sensory toys

Positive Reinforcement



- “I love when you use your words!” or “You gave me a hug instead of biting—great job!”

Additional Tips:



- Lots of active play e.g. dancing, kicking a ball, carrying weighted objects
- Offer lots of crunchy snacks

RESOURCES IF BITING CONTINUES



Health Checklist:

- Consulted with Pediatrician
- Consulted with child's Dentist (Age 12mo+)
- Hearing / Vision
- Developmental Screening (e.g. ASQ-3) shows age-appropriate progress
- Behavioral/Social Emotional Screenings (e.g. ASQ:SE-2)



Books:

- Teeth Are Not for Biting by Elizabeth Verdick
- No Biting by Karen Katz
- No Biting, Louise by Margie Palatini



Videos:

1. OUCH! How to Stop Toddler Biting – Dr. Mary Barbera

- Length: 17:54
- Why it's helpful: Dr. Barbera offers a clear, step-by-step approach to understanding and addressing biting, including:
 - The difference between "happy" and aggressive bites
 - Immediate responses that don't reinforce the behavior
 - A four-step method: Assess, Plan, Teach, Evaluate

2. How to Handle a Toddler Who Bites – Building Confident Families

- Length: 0:39 (quick tip format)
- Why it's helpful: A short, digestible video with quick strategies for redirecting biting and offering alternatives.

3. Why Do Children Bite? – HomoeoCARE

- Length: 10:31
- Why it's helpful: Explains both physiological (e.g., teething) and emotional (e.g., frustration) causes of biting, and how to differentiate between them.