

Biting Policy for North Carolina Child Care

Name of Facility:

Purpose

Biting can be a natural developmental behavior for young children. However, for the safety and well-being of all children, staff, and families, this policy is in place to address biting in a consistent, appropriate, and supportive manner.

Background

Biting can occur for several reasons, including:

- Teething discomfort
- Exploring the environment
- Needing attention
- Communicating needs and wants, such as hunger or fatigue.
- Expressing feelings or emotions, such as frustration, anger, confusion, or fear.
- Inability to communicate due to limited language abilities

This policy provides guidance around biting prevention and supporting children with expressing themselves in other ways. To minimize biting incidents, staff:

- Provide teething toys and sensory materials for younger children
- Use positive reinforcement and model appropriate behavior
- Read age-appropriate books about classroom behavior and expectations
- Observe and track patterns to identify triggers
- Do not allow pretend biting or rough play of any kind
- Offer extra support for children struggling with emotions or communication
- Create classroom rules on communicating wants, needs, and expressing feelings
- Maintain a developmentally appropriate teacher-to-child ratio for close supervision

Application

This policy applies to all children, families, visitors, volunteers, and staff.

Procedures

When a biting incident occurs, program staff follow these steps:

- A. For the child or adult who was bitten:
 1. Provide immediate comfort and care.
 2. Wash hands, put on gloves.
 3. Clean the affected area with soap and warm water.
 4. Provide any other necessary first aid (e.g., covering the bite with a bandage or applying an ice pack or cool cloth for pain and swelling).



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5. Document the incident on an incident report, add the incident to the facility incident log, and notify the child's parent/guardian per the facility's policy.
 6. Recommend the child or adult be seen by a physician if the skin is broken during the biting incident or if there are signs of infection (redness or swelling) afterwards.*
- B. For the child who bit, early educators:
1. Talk to the child who did the biting and try to find out what led to the incident. Calmly but firmly state, for example, "Biting is not okay. Biting hurts."
 2. Redirect the child to another activity.
 3. Encourage the child to express feelings using words or gestures. Model the use of words that describe feelings, for example, "Suzy took your ball. You felt angry. You bit Suzy. I can't let you hurt Suzy."
 4. Complete an incident report, add the incident to the facility incident log, and notify the parent/guardian following the facility's policy.
 5. Recommend the child be seen by a physician if the skin is broken during the biting incident*

If a child bites multiple times and based on the facility's Discipline Policy:

- A meeting will be scheduled with the parents/guardians to discuss strategies
- A behavior plan may be implemented, including additional interventions

C. Families are encouraged to:

- Share any changes at home that may impact behavior
- Reinforce positive behavior at home
- Work with our staff to develop strategies if biting persists

*Transmission of a blood-borne virus such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV through biting in an early care and education setting is very unlikely. Out of precaution, if a serious bite resulting in significant blood exposure occurs, all children involved should be referred to their pediatrician for medical evaluation.

Documentation

Both families (of the child who was bitten and the child who bit) will be notified of the incident on the same day. An incident report will be completed, and the incident will be added to the facility incident log. The identity of the other child will not be disclosed. Incident reports are kept on file for review and tracking.

Additional reporting may be necessary based on the local public health authority.

References

1. A bite in the playroom: Managing human bites in child care settings. *Pediatric Child Health*. 2008 Jul;13(6):515-26. PMID: 19436423; PMCID: PMC2532903.
2. Bright Horizons. *Tips to Help Children Who Bite*. <https://www.brighthouse.com/family-resources/how-to-prevent-manage-children-biting-behaviors>
3. California Childcare Health Program. Health and Safety Note: *Biting in the Child Care Setting*. https://cchp.ucsf.edu/sites/g/files/tkssra181/f/biting_h%26s_en_new.pdf



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4. Caring for Our Children, Standard 2.2.0.7: *Handling Physical Aggression, Biting, and Hitting*. <https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/2.2.0.7>
5. The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. *Responding to Your Child's Bite*. http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/biting-parenting_tool.pdf
6. Kinnell, G. (2008). No Biting: Policy and Practice for Toddler Programs, Second Edition.
7. NAEYC. Understanding and Responding to Children who Bite. <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/understanding-and-responding-children-who-bite>

Communication

Policy is reviewed with parents/guardians, volunteers, and staff in writing and verbally. Copies of the policy are in staff and parent handbooks.

Staff

- All current staff members and newly hired staff review the **Biting Policy** before providing care for children.
- Staff sign an acknowledgment form that includes the individual's name, the date the facility's policy was given and explained to the individual, the individual's signature, and the date the individual signed the acknowledgment.
- The child care facility keeps the signed **Biting Policy staff acknowledgment form** in the staff member's file.

Parents/Guardians

- A copy of the policy is given and explained to the parents/guardians of newly enrolled children on or before the first day the child receives care at the facility.
- Parents/guardians sign an acknowledgment form that includes the child's name, the date the child first attended the facility, the date the operator's policy was given and explained to the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian's name, parent/guardian's signature, and the date the parent/guardian signed the acknowledgment.
- The child care facility keeps the signed **Biting Policy parent acknowledgment form** in the child's file.

* For purposes of this policy, "staff" includes the operator and other administration staff who may be counted in ratio, additional caregivers, substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.



Biting Policy for North Carolina Child Care

Effective and Review Dates

Effective Date

This policy was reviewed and approved by:

Director/Owner

Print name:	Date:
Signature:	

Child Care Health Consultant (recommended)

Print name:	Date:
Signature:	

Annual Review Dates



Biting Policy for North Carolina Child Care

Parent or Guardian Acknowledgement Form

I, the parent or guardian of _____ **(child or children's name)** acknowledge that I have read and received a copy of the facility's Biting Policy for North Carolina Child Care.

Date policy given/explained
to parent/guardian

Date of child's enrollment

Print name of parent/guardian

Signature of parent/guardian

Date



Biting Policy for North Carolina Child Care

Staff Acknowledgement Form:

I _____ **(name)** acknowledge that I have read and received a copy of the facility's Biting Policy for North Carolina Child Care.

Date policy given/explained to staff

Staff signature

Date

