

HEAD START BITING POLICY

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Center: _____ Classroom: _____

Biting is a developmentally common problem that can be frustrating for parents of young children. Biting is preventable to a degree, but can occur in the most well-prepared early childhood setting. This behavior could be due to various reasons, such as lack of impulse control, lack of sufficient language, and may even be due to the power the child gains from biting. Some children may not have had consistent help in developing self-control. Impulsiveness also has a biological base, both in personality and in the rate of maturation.

The following steps should be taken when a child is biting others:

1. **Try to prevent it from happening.** A successful biter gets someone's total attention, making it very rewarding to the biter. Do what it takes to make sure the biter does not get this reward.
2. **Observe closely.** When and who does the child usually bite? Catch onto the pattern. Shadow the child who is prone to biting as the child goes about his/her business.
3. **Offer alternatives.** Teach the child to use words and to have patience. Strengthen his/her social skills. Make these your priority goals for this child.
4. **Make his/her wait minimal.** Gradually extend the amount of time the child is expected to wait to get what he/she wants.
5. **Enlist other children's help.** When the biter does not bite and instead asks for something, have the other children to clap for him/her, etc. This gives the child attention from his/her peers without biting.
6. **Give the attention to the child who is bitten, not the biter.** Do this in a way so as to not make the child that is bitten feel like a "victim".
7. **The parent(s) of the child that is bitten and the parent(s) of the child that is biting must receive a copy of this policy each time their child is bitten and/or bites.** Confidentiality must be followed, which means children's names cannot be released to anyone other than the parent(s) of child concerning a biting incident. Staff and/or volunteers must not release names when questioned about such incidents. An **INCIDENT REPORT FORM** must accompany this policy each time a child bites or is bitten.
8. **Parents/Guardians and Head Start staff must work together.** Discuss what the child does at school and at home. Head Start staff must keep ongoing documentation of the child's behaviors and share these observations with the parent/guardian on a regular basis. Plan should be followed very consistently for a month. Behaviors should end if parents/guardians and staff follow plan. ***If biting does not stop***, a meeting must be held between the parent/guardian and Head Start staff to address the behaviors and develop a more thorough behavior plan, which may include referrals to agencies that provide services to the Head Start Program.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Staff Signature _____ Date _____

Original – Child's Health Folder
Copy to Parent/Guardian
Copy to Health Coordinator
Copy to Child's Classroom Folder