



adults. Occasional biting from a preschooler may occur for the same reason as it does for toddlers. Preschoolers bite to have control over a situation, for attention, self-defense, or out of extreme frustration or anger. In older children, biting is often deliberately aggressive and you may need to take action with some positive parenting techniques.

How to Prevent Biting

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Helping your child learn to express his emotions appropriately is the best way to help prevent him from becoming a biter. Consider situations that make your child over emotional or stressed and be there to help him process his emotions when he is in these situations. Make sure your child is getting good nutrition and rest. Always supervise toddler play. Provide age-appropriate play toys. Involve your child in less stressful group activities like floor puzzles or music

and reading circles. Watch for confrontations and deal fairly and quickly to diffuse the situation. Avoid playful biting with your child such as nibbling on toes or nipping at fingers.

Should You Bite Your Child Back?

No! Don't bite him back. Biting is immature and you are a mature adult. The biter usually can tell by the reaction of the child who is bitten that biting hurts. If he really does not understand that biting hurts or if he is younger, you can encourage him to feel the effects of his own sharp teeth on his own arm.

First Aid for Bites

It's good to know what to do in the case of a bite that breaks the skin in order to protect against infection.

1. **Calm** the child.
2. **Wash** your hands with soap and water.
3. **Wash** the wound with soap and water.
4. **Cover** the injury with a bandage.
5. If the wound is bleeding, **control** the bleeding by applying direct pressure with a clean, dry cloth.
6. **Watch** the wound for signs of infection, like redness and swelling.
7. **Call** your pediatrician for advice if necessary.

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Parenting Challenges

BITING

*To earn 1 Baby Buck:
Handwrite a reflection that fills one
side of a notebook page.*



Biting

When my son turned four, our daughter was just beginning to walk. One day, during a toddler's playgroup, I sat my daughter on a low chair pushed up to a play table. Her little toes were just dangling over the edge of the chair. My darling four year old son was playing under the table and just couldn't resist the temptation of those pudgy little toes. In a moment's time my baby girl's fat big toe was in his mouth and CHOMP! He bit hard enough to draw blood. The baby was screaming as I ran around in a panic looking for something to stop the blood flow. My son just sat under the table and watched the mayhem. Later, when everything calmed down, I asked him why he bit his sister. He told me innocently, he just wanted to know what it would feel like. In this situation, the victim was his own little sister, so I was able to minister to the needs of both the biter and the one bitten, but I can only imagine the shock I would have felt if my son had bitten another child or if another child had bitten my baby. I am sure his explanation of just wanting to know what it felt like would not have been enough to calm either the other mother or me.

It's Normal

Biting another child or an adult is completely normal. Many children will bite or even go through a whole biting phase, but biting is still one of the most offensive and aggressive behaviors a child can display. The mother of the child who is bitten is often upset and worried. If the biting happens more than once, the biter might be disliked or asked to

What to Do if Your Child Bites

1. **Respond** immediately.
2. **Help** the bitten child and give positive attention to them first.
3. Look your child in the eye and **say** "No Bite" or "Biting hurts. We don't bite."
4. **Remove** the biter from the group.
5. Give **consequences**, such as taking away the toy and time out.
6. **Talk** about it when the situation is calm again. Determine the cause of the biting behavior and teach your child better responses.
7. **Protect** the repeat offender from his own impulses. Discuss your concerns with other parents and carefully supervise your child.

leave activities or child care. The parent of the biter is usually concerned and often at a loss for how to stop the behavior.

Why Kids Bite

Kids bite. There are as many theories about biting as there are teeth. Biting usually begins between the ages of eighteen months and three years old and lessens when the child can communicate his feelings. Infants who bite cannot usually connect biting with the pain that is caused. Their biting is a normal part of experimenting with cause and effect or relieving teething pain. Toddlers bite as a form of communication. They do not have the language skills to say what they need to say. They don't quite understand biting is wrong, so they use what is easiest to express their emotion. Many toddlers do not know how to share or that touch can hurt. The toddler learns these things by the reaction he gets from his victim or other

