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Funded by the Irish Government  
under the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010

## **Why children bite & strategies to deal with biting**

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Children sometimes bite other children. Although not all children bite, biting is considered a normal stage in a child's development. Children may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child.

### Children may bite for the following reasons:

#### Cause and Effect:

Children are eager explorers. They are constantly exploring cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable response often the response is dramatic i.e. there is a lot of noise and attention from the adults that are in the area when the biting occurs.

#### Strategy:

Stay calm don't over react or yell. Say no biting in a firm voice and explain to the child why biting hurts, the child who was bitten gets comforted and receives first aid. Encourage the child who has been bitten to say 'don't bite me you have hurt me'. The biter should be given **no** negative or positive attention for the next 5 minutes.

#### Teething:

Toddlers are often cutting teeth and it hurts, chewing on something relieves the pain momentarily.

#### Strategy:

Provide cold teething ring, teething rusks, frozen bagels (taking care to supervise your child whilst eating to avoid choking)

#### Sensory Exploration:

Children are very good at using all their senses to learn about the world. The **Oral Mode** an important style of learning for infants continues into toddler hood, they bite everything not just their playmates.

#### Strategy:

You can say no in a firm voice. Give him/her a variety of toys to touch smell and taste most of all encourage sensory play.

#### Self assertion:

This is probably the most common reason why children bite. It's a way to express frustration when they don't have all the language skills to do so.

#### Strategy:

Try to read what the child is trying to say, and word it to them, for example 'I know your angry and you want the truck lets see if there is another one that you would like'. Offer choices that give control to the child 'the big ball or the little ball' and show the choices to the child so that they also have the visual prompt especially if the child's language is limited. Notice and give positive attention as new turn taking skills and independence develop.

If you as a provider would like further information on sensory play activities please contact:

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