

Toddlers biting

It's a harsh reality, but epidemiological studies indicate that biting by toddlers is quite common. In daycare, as many as half of toddlers are bitten by another toddler.

Although largely non-acceptable behavior, many psychologists consider it normal for children under the age of 3 to bite. Toddlers do it to get attention and to vent out frustration or even anger. However, it is socially a big problem, especially at daycare centers, as it is embarrassing for the parents of a biter and worrisome for the parents of another child.

Though such habits should be changed as soon as possible, psychologists also caution parents against getting angry at the child or opting for harsh punishments. Instead, parents should focus on understanding the reasons behind such behavior and find the appropriate solution.

Remember that toddlers bite:

- When they are angry or frustrated
- When they are tired or feeling unwell
- When they do not want to share something
- When they find it difficult to wait for something or someone
- When they cannot communicate properly or cannot express their feelings
- When they cannot handle interference from other children
- When they are hungry
- When they feel insecure, especially with older children

Toddlers are still learning the art of self-control, and they are also not aware of the painful effect of the bite.

What should be done about biting?

There is no magic solution to this challenging problem. What is important is to diffuse the situation that prompted biting and remove the source of biting.

Adults must help children to understand their emotions, control their reactions, and express themselves in another more appropriate way. Parents or caretakers should try to teach children not to bite, but without taking punitive action. If the child is older than three years, it is a good idea to tell the child to say sorry to the victim.

If the biting continues, still be patient and pay more attention to the situations and causes of such behavior. Stay calm and always interfere at the right moment by telling the child about the harm of biting. Try to keep the toddler at an arm's distance, so that biting can be stopped on time. Teach a child to appropriately express anger or frustration by using right kind of language. And finally give your child enough time and attention, by playing together or reading books.

One should never bite back at a child, although some parents think that this can teach a child a lesson. Psychologists have shown that this strategy does not work and actually causes more harm. It is not uncommon that such a biting habit may disappear as abruptly as it started to happen.

But if a child continues to bite even after all the efforts of caretakers and parents, it is a good idea to seek help from a professional psychologist.

About the author:

Dr. Preet Bhinder (M.D.)

Dr. Preet is a family physician. He has been practicing medicine for the last 15 years and often sees children with various health and behavioral difficulties. He understands that biting can be quite embarrassing and challenging problem for the parents. He is also a passionate writer.

*Our experts are constantly writing some amazing health and safety tips for you and your children. They love sharing their knowledge, and we hope you find it useful as well. However, you should always consult with your doctor first. Be sure to leave a comment and share your thoughts with other parents in our community. For more amazing articles visit **www.LeighaMarina.com***