

Biting *usually* occurs between 1 & 2 ½ years old. It is a behaviour that can cause distress to both the perpetrator and the victim.

Biting may be a result of:

- Teething – sore mouth and need a form of soothing
- Frustration
- Sensory Exploration
- Impulsiveness
- Excitement
- Boredom
- Self-Assertion
- Seeking interaction/ play queue gone wrong
- Life changing experiences
- Learning the concept of cause and effect

At Tiny Toes we have initiated the following policy for the following reasons:

- To protect children attending the nursery.
- To encourage children to develop and learn pro-social skills
- To provide procedures for staff to follow when a bite occurs.
- To ensure a consistent approach to biting.
- To offer strategies to minimise the incidences of biting

Staff procedures when biting occurs:

- It is essential to be aware that the reasons for biting vary according to age group
- When biting occurs immediately comfort the 'bitee' and tend to the bite appropriately i.e. apply cold pack to bitten area if skin is not broken. If the skin is broken, there may be a risk of infection so running cold water should be used or a sterile swab under the cold pack.
- Always wear gloves when administering first aid.
- While confidentiality must be maintained both sets of parents should be well informed of circumstances surrounding the incident. This should be done in the first place on the Eylog system, an accident should be reported for the 'bitee's' parents and an incident reported for the 'Biter's' parents.
- If appropriate, staff members, ideally the child's key person, may discuss the incident with parents collecting children, but this should be done discreetly so that other children and parents cannot overhear.
- The child who bites can also be distressed and needs to be supported. Staff should ensure they follow the therapeutic approach as guided in the Behaviour Management Policy.
- The Health and Safety Lead will review all biting incidents to identify patterns and repeat occurrences.

Strategies to minimise biting incidents:

- Provide a busy, challenging, well organised environment.
- Sensitively monitor the child that may bite.
- Divert the child's attention to something stimulating to their interests and abilities.
- Provide teething toys (appropriate to age).
- Use eating times to explain that teeth should be used for eating and chewing food.
- If biting is an ongoing issue, carry out the assessments outlined in The Behaviour Management Policy to analyse what may be triggering biting.
- Alternative approaches should be discussed and agreed with the child's parents to ensure a consistent approach is carried out.
- Make IEPs/ Behaviour plans where biting is ongoing.