



## Biting and How to Make It Stop Parent Tips

Let's begin with the fact that biting is not uncommon. If your child has bitten you, a sibling, or classmate, know you are not alone. Young children bite for a variety of reasons. Most commonly, kids bite because they have a limited vocabulary and cannot make their needs known. Social emotional learning can be a powerful tool in eliminating biting and other negative behaviors. Assist your child in identifying specific feelings. Feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, or lonely are all underlying emotions which can be exhibited in an outburst of hitting or biting. Children may bite because they are overtired, teething, needing attention, or feeling out of control. The goal is to eliminate the behavior.

### Tips to Stop Biting

- Firmly, but quietly state, "No biting" when your child bites. Keep your own emotions in check while clearly stating the expectation for the behavior to stop.
- Focus your attention on the person who was bitten to model empathy and reduce negative attention.
- Explain cause and effect. Biting creates pain. A hug creates a smile.
- Watch for triggers to biting behavior (tired, anxious, frustrated, etc.).
- Help your child to identify and verbally express emotions.
- Role play how to interact with others using words. Problem solving and practicing coping skills will benefit your child in many situations.
- Avoid labeling your child a "biter."
- Do not bite your child back or allow siblings to bite one another.
- Make sure your child is getting enough sleep.
- Offer teething toys.
- Praise your child for appropriate behaviors and positive friendship skills.
- Provide choices for your child to feel in control (clothing, meal choices, etc.)
- Read books about friendship and kindness related to biting.

*Teeth Are Not for Biting* by Elizabeth Verdick

*People Don't Bite People* by Lisa Wheeler

*No Biting* by Karen Katz

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