

BITING

Definition:

Using the mouth/teeth to cause or threaten to cause pain or injury to self, others or things.

Behavior:

Why could this be happening?

- Biting is often a form of communication. Without language skills, a child uses his/her body to communicate.
- As a way to cope with a challenge or fulfill a need.
- A child may be ill (especially if chronic ear infections).
- A child may be teething.
- A child has been bitten by another child.

Typical Development:

- Biting is the first aggressive action an infant learns as a way to control the environment.
- When frustrated, biting is common for children under age 2 ½.
- Toddlers and older children often use biting for expressing aggression toward their parents and other children, especially during play or as a means of gaining attention.
- Most children normally outgrow the tendency unless they have emotional or sensory problems.

When to be Concerned:

- If the biting persists over a long period of time (over two months).
- If the child is over age 3.

Possible Resources:

Help Me Grow, Early Childhood Family Education, pediatrician, occupational therapist, mental health professional