



FACT SHEET

Supporting children with biting behaviours

Biting behaviours are most common in children aged between 1 -3 years, within this age group children are learning to communicate and developing their social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills.

What can trigger children to bite:

Teething

Frustration

Hunger

Difficulty communicating

Sensory seeking

Exploration/experimentation

Feeling excited

Being overtired

Experiencing hurt

Feeling angry/or overwhelmed

Diagnosed disability

Seeking to gain / get away from something

Diagnosed disability

As skills are still developing, this can result in behaviours such as biting arising as a means of communication from a child with no other means of letting others know what is happening for them.

The challenges of biting behaviours at this stage of development can be frustrating for caregivers, often linking back to a child's difficulty in communicating and expressing their needs/wants & emotions effectively.

Biting can also occur in children over 3 years, as a result of these factors or other triggers such as stress, overwhelm, defence or other factors unique to each child.





Support strategies

- ✔ Role model positive interactions and communication with others and encourage children when you see them displaying positive behaviours.
- ✔ Provide enough resources, toys and materials to enable parallel play.
- ✔ Provide activities to suit children's interest-keep them engaged.
- ✔ Use visual aids to support with language development.
- ✔ Use small group experiences and interactions to role model social skills such as turn taking, gentle hands, using language to communicate your needs.
- ✔ Use storytelling, songs and games to promote and develop language, communication and social skills.
- ✔ Provide teething toys or sensory necklaces to bite on.
- ✔ Provide teething gel to ease teething pain.
- ✔ Provide children with autonomy throughout their routine such as self-serving meals, progressive meals and indoor/outdoor play. Autonomy increases engagement and decreases unwanted behaviours.
- ✔ Provide opportunities for sensory play such as blowing bubbles, singing, using a straw, exploring textures, crunchy foods such as apples or crackers.