

# Biting



*Experimental biting is very common, particularly with under 2's. It is usual for children aged 16 - 30 months to express their emotion by biting others, often because they lack the words to express how they are feeling.*

## What are the common difficulties?

- Children biting staff and peers

## Why do biting difficulties occur?

- Children do not have the words to express how they feel
- Biting often ensures the child gets what they want!
- Biting often gives the child lots of attention from adults
- Sensory stimulation
- Children do not know how to express their emotions
- Children are bored
- There are not enough resources available
- Experiences on offer within the setting are not appropriate
- Inconsistent responses from staff and parents/carers
- Delayed development



## How can we help?

- Staff and parents/carers need to respond consistently when the child bites. Eg. "Stop, biting hurts" (and use a hand signal to indicate stop) All attention should then be given to the child or adult who has been bitten
- Make sure staff and parents look serious and use a firm tone of voice when the child bites
- Make sure that the child who has bitten does not receive a lot of attention
- Complete ABC sheets to try to establish triggers for the biting
- Give lots of specific praise when the child is playing appropriately
- Set up opportunities for turn-taking and reinforce the language the child needs to use. Eg. "My turn/your turn/I'd like a go/it's mine"
- If the child is cutting teeth, they may need something to chew on
- When you speak to the parents/carers of the child who has been bitten, do not name the other child, clearly tell them what procedures you are putting into place and that you will protect their child to the best of your ability.