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# Quality Care For Kids

## A newsletter for Scott County Child Care Providers

By Jane Matzen, RN and Heidi Hotvedt, RN

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Call your Child Care Nurse Consultant (CCNC) if you have any questions about child health and safety, or any special training needs.



[www.earlychildhoodiowa.org](http://www.earlychildhoodiowa.org)

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### When Children Bite

Biting is a frustrating problem for both parents and child care providers. Unfortunately, biting in group care especially with toddlers is not uncommon. Children bite for many different reasons including frustration, teething, and exploration. Toddlers have limited language skills to communicate their needs and may turn to biting when frustrated. It is important to care and evaluate both children when biting occurs.

Care for the child who is bitten:

- Provide comfort
- Apply gloves and assess for blood at the bite mark
- Wash the area with soap/water then cover with a bandage

- Remove gloves and wash your hands
- Provide an ice pack to reduce pain and swelling
- Notify the parent/guardian of the bite and possible blood/saliva exposure
- Document the incident and care given

Care for the child that did the biting:

- Apply gloves and assess if the child got blood in their mouth
- Even if there is no blood, have the child rinse their mouth with water and spit it out
- Remove gloves and wash your hands
- Comfort the child and provide redirection

### Planning Interventions for Toddlers who Bite

“Toddlers and Biting: Finding the Right Response” is an article written for parents, but it can also be very useful for early care providers. The article is full of examples of how to teach language, coping, and social skills that will promote children’s emotional and mental health. The importance of physical health is emphasized with the need for children to have many opportunities for active play and adequate sleep which can decrease biting episodes. The article also includes interventions that support healthy teething and provide oral stimulation.

**Zero to Three recommends the following reading books that promote empathy:**

- *Teeth are Not for Biting* by Elizabeth Verdick
- *No Biting* by Karen Katz
- *No Biting, Louise* by Margie Palatini

The article “Toddlers and Biting: Finding the Right Response” from Zero to Three can be found at <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/232-toddlers-and-biting-finding-the-right-response>

**Additional information on biting:**

Child Care Resource & Referral blog post on biting: <https://iowaccrr.org/blog/2015/9/17/CCRR-Blog/Ouch-That-left-a-mark/ar/98/>

CCR&R sample biting policy <https://iowaccrr.org/search/results/?q=biting>

*What Should I Do When My Child is Bitten in Child Care?* <http://articles.extension.org/pages/25371/what-should-i-do-when-my-child-is-bitten-in-child-care>