Biting Policy

Program Philosophy
Biting is a natural, developmental behavior in which many young children engage, especially during their second and third years of life. We recognize that biting is a distressing activity for parents, staff, and the child who has been bitten. Because biting is so distressing, everyone involved would like to eliminate it quickly. Unfortunately, a “quick fix” is not usually available. However, biting does require immediate action by staff to comfort the child who has been bitten, express disapproval to the biter, and to find the cause of the biting. Children bite for a variety of reasons so it’s important for adults to get to the cause of the behavior. Most of the reasons for biting are not related to behavior problems nor does biting make the biter a “bad child”. Since biting is developmentally related, it is more common for toddlers to bite than for older preschool age children.

How Staff Respond
Staff members respond to biting as they would other aggressive behavior – by:
• calmly, yet firmly telling the biter that biting hurts and is not allowed
• by comforting the victim immediately and providing first aid if needed
  • wash the bite with soap and water
  • apply ice to reduce swelling
  • if the skin is broken, universal precautions are followed and an injury report is written
• by documenting the biting in an incident report
When a particular child bites on a regular basis, the center staff attempt to find the cause of the biting and take action to prevent future incidents. The staff look at:
• the precipitating factors such as time of day, area of the classroom, the activity, other children involved, etc.
• changes in the child’s life such as health problems, teething, the absence of a family member, the birth of a sibling, transitions, etc.
The staff then develop strategies to help prevent further biting. These might include:
• Ensuring that there are enough materials, including duplicates, for the children to use
• Ensuring that there is enough space in the classroom and that there are quiet times in the schedule
• Shadowing a biter in situations and times when the child has bitten before
• Providing teething toys for children who are getting new teeth
• Showing disapproval of biting
• Working collaboratively with parents to reduce or eliminate biting

How Parents Are Informed
The parents of a bitten child are notified of the incident the day the incident occurred. Confidentiality prohibits the staff from divulging the name of the biter. The parents of the biter are informed personally and privately the same day.

How Biting is Documented?
All biting incidents are documented by the teacher(s) in an incident report which is reviewed and approved by the center director. A copy of the incident report is given to the parents. The other copy is kept in the center’s incident report file.

Support for Children and Families
Every attempt will be made to work with children and families to help eliminate the biting behavior. However, there are instances where biting remains an issue and others are at risk for injury. In these cases, the staff and the director will work with families in order to develop an individualized plan to support the child. If the biting behavior persists, the Center reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program. A two-week written notice will be provided to the family noting the last day of enrollment. The family will be held responsible for tuition until the child is officially exited from the program.