



## **BITING POLICY**

Kiddie Academy has developed a detailed set of policies regarding behavior management and discipline. We have always approached biting in a proactive matter. Over the years, we have found it necessary to have a written statement on biting, so parents and new staff are aware of what our response will be if the situation arises with a child, or if biting is occurring in their classroom. Many of these guidelines were adapted from Gretchen Kinnell's No Biting; Policy and Practice For Toddler Programs.

Any child has the potential to bite. Although we have seen biting in children under one year of age and with three and four year old children, most biting incidents occur between the ages of 13-36 months of age. Biting is unfortunately not unexpected in toddler groups. Children may bite for the following reasons:

- **Developmental Issues:** Teething; Oral Motor Development; Sensory Exploration of Surroundings; Learning About Cause and Effect; Developing Awareness of Space; Learning Through Imitation of Others; Developing Autonomy; Language Development, Attention Seeking; Learning to hold on and let go; Developing Sensory Integration
- **Expression of Feelings, which may include:** Frustration and Anger; Tension and Anxiety; Excitement; Reaction to abuse or physical aggression
- **Environment:** Too stimulating or not stimulating enough; Crowded spaces and no space for privacy; Transitions from one activity to the next; Inappropriate expectations (sharing, waiting turns, etc); Rigid Schedule; Change in Home Routine or family status

It is difficult to predict who will bite or when a biting incident will occur, but we are ready to help children who do bite learn different behaviors. We are ready to give treatment, sympathy and advice to children who are bitten. Our environment is set up to meet a child's needs so that boredom, frustration or over stimulation is avoided. Our atmosphere is calm and cheerful and filled with developmentally appropriate equipment and fun interactive activities. We also work to model acceptable and appropriate behaviors for the children, helping them to learn words to express their feelings and giving them tools to resolve conflicts with our help.

When a child bites, we help the child who was bitten. We reassure the child and care for his or her bite. If the skin is not broken, we wash the area with soap and water and apply ice to the affected area. We encourage the children to apply the ice, even if they are refusing it. If the skin is broken, we wash the area thoroughly with soap and water and will apply a band aid to keep the area clean, if necessary. We will call the family of the child that is bitten to inform them of the incident. We may recommend that they seek medical attention if the skin is broken, as some pediatricians prescribe an antibiotic as a precaution to infection. The teachers will write an Accident/Injury Report, which will be signed by Administration and share it with the child's parent at pick up time. The parent will be asked to sign the original and if requested by the parent, a copy of the report will be made available.

We also respond to the child who did the biting. We show the child strong disapproval of biting. Our specific response varies by circumstances, but our basic message is that biting is the wrong thing to do. We also help the child learn different, more appropriate behavior and we inform his or

her parents of the Aggressive Behavior Report, which is written by the teachers, signed by Administration and shared with the parent at pick up time. The parent will be asked to sign the original and if requested by the parent, a copy of the report will be made.

The name of the child who was bitten and the name of the child who did the biting will remain confidential in our verbal and written interactions. This is done to avoid labeling and ostracizing. We know how upsetting it is when a child is bitten or has been biting. Trusting us gives our team the opportunity to use their time and energy to work on stopping the biting. We ask that you allow us to handle the situation and have faith in our attempts to diminish biting.

The teachers and administration will analyze the cause of the biting, whether it is an isolated incident or if the biting is ongoing. We look for triggers or clues in the written reports which sometimes help us detect a pattern. We take a look at our environment to make sure that the classroom set up, curriculum, daily schedule and teachers are meeting the needs of the individual children. We will share our details with the families involved so that they are made aware of how we are addressing the problem.

We will develop a plan to address the causes of the biting, focusing on keeping children safe and helping those who are stuck in biting patterns. We consistently implement the plan for a determined time frame. We maintain close communication with the individual families involved. When ongoing biting is occurring in a classroom, the teachers will share their strategies in their weekly letter and offer resources on biting, as it affects the entire dynamic of the classroom and certainly causes upset for the families.

Most times, it is reported by parents that the biting is not occurring in the home and is only occurring in our setting. We will discuss strategies, options and parent suggestions in order to best support the child being bitten and the child who is biting, so that our approach can be reinforced in the home so that each of our responses are consistent, should the biting begin at home.

We understand that biting is upsetting and strong emotional responses follow. We wish we could guarantee that biting will never happen in our program, but we know that there is no such guarantee, as biting is unfortunately not unexpected.

Although biting is not appropriate, it does not always warrant termination from our program. However, we have had to ask families to leave our program due to the severity and frequency of the biting. With each decision to terminate, all of our resources and attempts to diminish the biting were exhausted and the biting continued. The decision to terminate a child who is biting is not easy, but sometimes necessary. The decision to terminate will be made at our discretion.

You can count on us to respond to biting in timely and appropriate manner. We will support your children, whether they bite or are bitten. We want the best for all of the children in our program. If you would like more information on biting or have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Enrollment Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_