

Background

The safety of children at the service is the ultimate priority.

To comply with the Education and Care National Regulations 2011 and the National Quality Standard 2018, services need well-considered and documented processes so that staff and educators can respond to children's injuries competently and calmly and in a way that ensures that children are kept safe and/or risk of further harm is reduced.

Policy statement

Our service is committed to assist children to reduce their biting behaviour. We acknowledge that biting is a natural part of young children's development and cannot be eliminated by punishment. We know that it takes time and patience so we will help all children who bite reduce this behaviour to ensure the safety and welfare of their peers. The senior Educators and Educators at this Service are committed to respond appropriately and professionally and we encourage parents to work in collaboration with us to reduce and eliminate biting using positive approach to behaviour guidance.

This Policy details how the Service will reduce biting behaviour by using careful observation and appropriate curriculum. Where biting occurs to protect the victim, while at the same time acting in the best interests of both children.

Strategies and practices

- At the time of enrolment, the Nominated Supervisor will inform parents in a natural and honest way about the possibility of biting and the associated risks, particularly in the younger age groups.
- The Nominated Supervisor will describe the measures taken to prevent biting and the procedure followed if biting occurs.
- You may never discover the reason that a child bites but some of the common causes are:

Developmental and Emotional factors-:

- Frustration from failure to communicate their needs and wants
- Teething
- Fear
- Sadness
- Attention seeking
- Limited self-regulation or self-control (because they are still gaining these skills)
- Stress

Environmental factors-:

- Congestion in any one area-too many children in too small a place
- Competition for toys (or for a favourite toy)
- Over-stimulation (too much colour, noise, activity)
- Limited or no quiet area
- To gain access to something denied
- Difficulty waiting for a turn
- Boredom – (not enough activity)

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO TO HELP PREVENT BITING BEHAVIOUR

- Give children positive attention every day to build up their self-esteem.
- Give children safe things to bite on when teething.
- Supervise play situations.
- Monitor carefully the play between different age groups and where there are differences in size and strength.
- Intervene in situations where children cannot cope.
- Keep group play to short periods and small groups.
- Plan ahead, anticipate difficult situations and redirect activity or response.
- Provide a range of equipment and multiples of the most popular toys so that turn taking, and sharing is kept to a minimum.
- Reinforce attempts at cooperative play and use of language and gestures to communicate.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO FOR THE CHILDREN IF BITING OCCURS

- Attend to both children.
- Children are immediately separated if the bite is witnessed. There are occasions where children may be bitten and not make a sound, cry, or show an adult what has happened.
- At the point of separation, the children are told firmly 'Biting hurts, we don't bite' or 'Teeth are for chewing food not biting people.' 'Your friend [name of child] is very sad.' 'Can you see he/she is crying.' Ensure the use of appropriate language for the age group involved. This must be done in such a way as to convey to the child that the 'biting behaviour' is not acceptable and not show rejection of the child.
- Priority is to comfort the bitten child once children are separated and other children removed from the situation. Administer first aid immediately. If possible, allow the child who has bitten to 'help' administer first aid to the child they have bitten. This is only possible if the bitten child is not fearful of the other child. Otherwise, it is helpful to involve the child who bit if only to keep the child nearby and to observe what happens.
- If the lack of verbal communication is a possible reason why the child has bitten, try to ascertain what the child was trying to say or ask for and then provide the appropriate modelling of the words accompanied by acceptable social actions.
- Provide the bitten child with verbal modelling of acceptable language to prevent another child from biting – 'Stop' with hand raised and open palm is a very acceptable response to a potential threat. 'My turn' and 'Your turn' modelling will be used by educators to assist children in negotiating sharing of toys or equipment.
- If the skin is broken the parents of both children will be encouraged to seek medical advice.

AFTER ATTENDING TO THE CHILDREN YOU SHOULD

- Inform the Nominated Supervisor.
- The Nominated Supervisor will provide consultation to educators and depending on the qualification and experience of the educators, the Nominated Supervisor or the educators will call the parents.
- Telephone the parents at the first possible opportunity to advise them their child has bitten another child or has received a bite.
- Explain the precautions taken to secure the safety of the children involved. This may involve explaining some of the biting policy over the telephone.
- Complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Report Form for both children involved.
- If medical attention is required for the injury, the details will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Report Form.
- When convenient, discuss with other educators present what may have triggered the biting behaviour.

- If a child is showing consistent biting behaviour, arrange a parent meeting to discuss possible reasons for the child biting and appropriate strategies to support the child.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF BITING CONTINUES TO BE AN ISSUE

- Observe the child. Once you have a week's worth of time/event samples and observations, look at them to see if you can find any patterns.
- Alert all educators who work with the child for the need to be vigilant with supervision.
- Consult with the child's parents. Allow them time to ask you questions too.
- Reflect on the curriculum. In what ways might your curriculum be contributing to the biting?
- Consider placing the child in a group of older children for a short period of time. This option will be discussed with the parents.
- Help the child to develop additional vocabulary and to use appropriate gestures. This will be discussed with the parents and other educators.
- Examine the environment and the pattern of the day in conjunction with the child's own pattern.
- Consider making specific records of the child throughout the day to look for antecedent behaviour that may prompt a biting incident i.e. time sampling.

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure educators are regularly reminded about and trained in the specialised responses to any incident involving a baby.

Responsibilities of parents

- To collaborate with educators in establishing any behaviour guidance plan required.

Procedure and forms

- Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Report Form
- Injury on Intake Form
- Accident/Illness Record

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursions and Incursions Policy
- Handwashing Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Positive Guidance
- Relationships with children Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
	86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
	87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
	89	First Aid kits

	136	First Aid qualifications
	146	Nominated supervisor
	155	Interactions with children
	161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Sources

- Guide to the National Quality Framework (NQF) – 2024 edition. ACECQA.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018
- ACECQA. (2024). When Children Bite. Retrieved from <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/when-children-bite> accessed 26 June 2025
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (current version as of 2025).

Further reading and useful websites

- When children bite! A resource for early childhood educators <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/WhenChildrenBite.PDF> accessed 26 June 2025
- Successfully dealing with a child who bites Care for Kids <https://www.careforkids.com.au/child-care-articles/article/79/successfully-dealing-with-a-child-who-bites> accessed 26 June 2025
- Kinnell, Gretchen (2002) No Biting. Redleaf Press: St. Paul, Minnesota. http://raisingchildren.net.au/common_concerns/babies_behaviour_concerns.html accessed 26 June 2025

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur, and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Kaylene Harper	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018.	January 2019
2	13 February 2019	Kaylene Harper	Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	February 2020
3	28 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	January 2021
4	13 October 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	October 2021
5	21 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy	September 2022
6	27 September 2022	Linda Hollard	Reviewed policy Accessed sources and further reading/useful	September 2023
7	22 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading/useful websites.	August 2024
8	9 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
9	26 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Reviewed policy. Updated sources and useful websites.	June 2026