



# **OUCH!**

## **TAKING THE STING OUT OF BITING**

### **Is this Normal?**

Children biting other children or biting their caregivers is a common yet distressing behavior. Biting typically occurs in children under age three who lack the verbal and interpersonal skills to effectively deal with conflict. Instead, they push, shove, or bite. Common reasons for biting are frustration, lack of communication skills, imitation, teething, curiosity, and developing social skills. While biting may be developmentally typical, it is not socially acceptable. Biting causes distress and frustration among parents and caregivers. While many bites cannot be prevented, caregivers can provide closer supervision, distract and redirect a child who is prone to bite, and verbalize potential feelings and alternative behaviors to the child.



Supporting, promoting, and strengthening the profession of family childcare thereby enriching the lives of providers, children, families, and communities.

**Shaming and Harsh  
Punishment Do Not  
Reduce Biting**

**Say "No biting. Biting  
hurts"**

**Shift your attention  
to the injured child**

**Biting the child back  
is not a useful  
response**

**Have age  
appropriate  
expectations for a  
child's behavior**

**Have predictable  
schedule, routines  
and transitions**

**Make sure your child  
is well rested**

### **RESOURCES**

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)  
[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)  
[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)