

Little Stepping Stones I & II

BITING POLICY

Little Stepping Stones recognizes that biting is an undesirable, yet age appropriate, toddler behavior. We understand how upsetting it can be when a child bites or is bitten by another child. We also understand that toddlers bite for many different reasons, including: sensory exploration, teething, to determine cause and effect, attention, imitation, asserting their independence, frustration, fatigue and stress. Therefore, Little Stepping Stones does not focus on punishment for children who bite, but rather on teaching effective techniques to help the children learn more appropriate behaviors, as well as preventing biting before it occurs. We do not terminate the care of toddlers who are exhibiting biting behaviors.

When biting occurs, our staff members immediately care for the child who was bitten. An Accident Report is completed for each biting incident and recorded in the center's Injury Log.

The parents of the child who bit are also informed via an Incident Report. These reports are signed by the teacher, a member of management, and the parent. All information is kept strictly confidential.

Staff members address a child who has bitten in a firm manner, telling the child that biting hurts and that we only bite food. The child is redirected to another activity, presented with an appropriate object to bite, or otherwise distracted. Staff members may "shadow" a child to help prevent him/her from biting other children. Verbal and sign language are strongly encouraged. Staff members also help the child to identify his/her feelings through acknowledgement. In addition we work very closely with the parents to find effective solutions to changing the behavior.

Little Stepping Stones Staff receives training in regards to toddler behavior, including biting. We work closely with Smart Start, as well as with an Infant/Toddler Specialist and a Behavioral Therapist to ensure that we have ample, age appropriate materials, an age appropriate daily schedule of activities, and that we exhibit effective use of techniques for preventing and changing undesirable behaviors.

The role of the Division of Child Development regarding biting is to observe the classroom for any supervision issues and to ensure that staff members conduct themselves appropriately when biting occurs. The Division of Child Development cannot terminate care of children in our program for biting.

Written materials are available regarding biting, which may offer useful information to help parents fully understand biting behavior. Please see a member of management for a copy of our "Biting Binder".