

When Children Bite:

Behavior As Communication



What might the child be communicating?	How might a caregiver respond?
<p>Frustration</p> <p>Children may not have another way to express their feelings. They may be communicating a message, such as, “I want that ball!”</p>	<p>Support children in expressing frustration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Describe how they might feel: “You are frustrated. You want that ball.”- Offer simple words or gestures to express frustration (e.g., “mine,” “no,” “stop”).
<p>Challenges in playing with others</p> <p>Children may feel overwhelmed by being near or playing with other children. Children may not know how to take turns with play materials.</p>	<p>Support children to play near or with each other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adjust the environment so that there is enough space and materials for small groups- Help children understand each other’s ideas
<p>Cause and effect</p> <p>Children are learning about the world! They may be curious about the effect their action has on others.</p>	<p>Help children understand the impact of their action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gently let a child know that their action may hurt another child- Provide other ways for a child to explore cause and effect
<p>Coping with uncomfortable feelings</p> <p>Children may feel sad, hungry, tired, bored, or anxious and they use a variety of behaviors to express how they feel.</p>	<p>Help children manage and express uncomfortable emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Offer words or signs to help children express their emotions- Stay close to children, offer reassurance, and comfort items- Provide opportunities for rest, quiet time, and less stimulating activities

Reference:

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. (n.d.). Responding to your child’s bite. Retrieved from https://cainclusion.org/teachingpyramid/materials/family/biting-parenting_tool.pdf