Hitting and biting: a safety and next-step plan

Print this sheet, or talk through the prompts together. Use only the parts that help. Keep completed copies private.

Complete this after everyone is safe and calm. Record only what is useful. Keep notes private, particularly when another child is involved.

Our immediate response

Adult who will move close and separate children calmly: _____

Short boundary we will use: _____

How we will care for the hurt child and get help if needed: _____

Example words: “I will not let you bite. Biting hurts. I am helping you move here.”

Do not hit or bite back. Seek appropriate help for injuries.

What we noticed

What happened just before? _____

What did our child do? _____

What happened afterwards? _____

Was there a repeated situation, such as waiting or crowded play? _____

Describe actions without labels such as “naughty” or “aggressive”. An observation helps you plan; it does not diagnose a cause.

Continue: Hitting and biting: a safety and next-step plan

One safer action to teach

A word, gesture or way to ask for help: _____

How we will model it during calm play: _____

How we will recognise and respond when our child tries it: _____

Example: “We will practise saying or signing ‘help’ when two toys want the same block. An adult will respond promptly.”

Make the next situation easier

One change to the space, waiting time or adult support: _____

Carer we will share the plan with: _____

When we will review: _____

If incidents are frequent, severe or hard to manage safely, speak to your health visitor or GP. Use Action for Children’s guidance for further support.

Browse all free resources.

For ideas to use alongside this resource, read When a toddler hits or bites: keep everyone safe and teach the next step.

More help for your family

Respond calmly in the moment, care for the hurt child and look for a useful skill to practise later.

Keep everyone safe, use fewer words and leave the teaching for a calmer moment.