



 A subsidiary agency of the  
Greater Miami Jewish Federation

# TODDLER BITING

## TEACHER SUPPORT NIGHT





**DEVELOPMENT**



**PREVENTION**



**INTERVENTION**



# WHY DO TODDLERS BITE?

**LACKS  
LANGUAGE  
SKILLS**

**OVER-  
STIMULATED/  
OVER-TIRED**

**EXPERIMENTING  
WHAT WILL  
HAPPEN?**

**NEEDS MORE  
ACTIVE  
PLAYTIME**

**TEETHING**

**SEEKS ORAL  
STIMULATION**



# WHAT IS A BITING CHILD TRYING TO COMMUNICATE?

**ANGER**

**FRUSTRATION**

**EXCITEMENT**

**FEAR**

**ANXIETY**

**CONFUSION**



# PREVENTING AND RESPONDING

- Provide teething toys
- Provide opportunities to move and explore
- Allow child to eat when hungry, sleep when tired, sit on your lap, have enough time
- Acknowledge child's frustration and give them words to express feelings (offer a solution)

*“You’re angry because you want the truck. -> “I see another truck, let’s go get it.”*



# PREVENTING AND RESPONDING

- Model appropriate words to ask for something. “Ask Josh, ‘*Can I use the truck?*’”
- Intervene in a calm and caring way when child isn’t able to manage a situation.
- Identify opportunities for teaching conflict resolution skills.



# BOTTOM LINE:

**BITING AT THIS AGE AND STAGE IS  
TOTALLY DEVELOPMENTALLY  
APPROPRIATE.  
LET'S ADJUST OUR EXPECTATIONS**



# OBSERVE:

**What happened  
right before?**

**Who was bit?  
Always the same  
child? Different  
each time?**

**What was the  
child doing?**

**Where was the  
child?**



# SUPPORT LANGUAGE SKILLS

**01**

**Give child words based on what he's likely thinking.**

**02**

**Help express feelings in an appropriate way.**

**03**

**Reinforce when child uses words appropriately.**

**04**

**Give child age-appropriate choices**

**05**

**Consider a speech evaluation**



# COPING WITH OVERSTIMULATION

**01**

**Music on low volume**

**03**

**Use firm “bear” hugs if child is sensory-seeking**

**02**

**Implement a lot of sensory activities**

**04**

**Create a “cozy corner” or safe space**



# RESPONDING TO BITING INCIDENTS

**REMEMBER to keep your own feelings in check.**

**Take a deep breath (or 3) and center yourself.**

*\*\*REMEMBER: Children cannot learn from you if they feel shamed or attacked.*



# RESPONDING TO BITING INCIDENTS

- **Get down to eye level.**
- **Make eye contact.**
- **FIRM but calm voice:**  
***“Ouch! Biting hurts.”***

**(Keep it short and simple)**



# RESPONDING TO BITING INCIDENTS

**Shift attention to the child who was bitten.**

***“Did you like that? Say, ‘STOP!’”***  
***“Look at her face.”***