

BITING AND BEHAVIOR POLICY

Biting

Biting is a behavior that is both age and stage appropriate for children under the age of 3 years. Even in high quality settings, where staff is vigilant, a variety of activities are available, and all preventative strategies are used, biting may still occur. Understanding the reasons for biting, taking the necessary preventative measures and communicating with families will hopefully bring an end to the problem. We understand the frustration from both sides of a biting incident and our staff works very hard to ensure that the biting incident is handled in a way that respects both families involved in the incident.

We handle biting incidents as follows:

The child who is bitten is attended to immediately. The child is taken to a quiet area and the bite is examined and the child comforted. The bite is cleaned and ice is applied to prevent swelling. If the skin is broken and depending upon the severity of the bite, the child's parents may be contacted to let them decide if they wish to seek medical consultation. After the child that is bitten is taken care of, we focus on the biter. Removing the child from the area of play to another area and communicate that biting hurts and we need to be gentle. We go on to explain and demonstrate to the biter what gentle and acceptable behavior means. If the incident happens repeatedly with the biter, attention given to the child will vary to avoid establishing a predictable and routine pattern, which may become positive reinforcement for the biter.

The parent(s) of the bitten child will be verbally informed of the incident which is documented at the child care center. With respect to confidentiality we do not share the name of the biter with the parent(s) of the child who was bitten.

The parent(s) of the biter will be informed of the biting incident and due to confidentiality will not be told the name of the child that was bitten.

We have reference and resource materials for the parents of the biter and the bitten child to better understand the biting behavior.

The child care center director will consult with the parent(s) of a habitual biter to develop strategies that can be used at the center and in the home, so that we are working together. The director will continue communicating on the status of the biting via e-mails, phone calls and/or meetings.

After all steps have been taken to address the biting behavior, and if it is deemed in the best interest of the child and other children attending the child care center, then the child will be removed from the center. The director will work with the parent(s) to help develop a contingency/transitional plan and assist with referrals to appropriate child care services.

Some of the strategies that the staff may use to help prevent biting incidents from happening are the following:

- We give children wet wash cloths or biting rings for biting on. This reduces the sensitivity to their teeth and gums, satisfies their biting needs and reduces the likelihood that they will bite other children.
- We encourage children to use simple words to communicate their wants and needs. Each time there is a conflict, we remind the child to use their words.
- We stay close to children who are in a “biting phase” and try to be ready to intervene quickly before a biting incident occurs.
- We provide a generous variety of toys and materials that encourage children to stay involved. Since a large majority of incidents occur when children want the same toy or object, we try to provide duplicates of favorite toys so children will not be tempted to fight.
- We are aware of times throughout the day when a child is tired or hungry or may be overstimulated. Also being aware of transitional times; moving to other rooms, indoor to outdoor play and vice versa, preparing for meals and preparing for nap time.
- We use lots of positive reinforcement and redirection, praising children when they are playing cooperatively, sharing and being kind to each other.

Behavior

While in the care of our center, the children at Harmony are taught to respect themselves, others, physical space, and materials. On most occasions, age appropriate behaviors are managed through communication with the parent as well as a positive reinforcement approach. On some occasions, children who are disruptive* or continuously aggressive may need a behavioral plan to be put into place. Harmony Early Learning will not tolerate continuous disruptive or aggressive behaviors by children of any age. While we focus on each child as an individual, if a child’s behavior continuously takes away from the care and safety of the others, the following processes will be followed:

- A child who continuously** demonstrates intolerable*** or uncontrollable**** behavior against other children or teachers will result in a parent/teacher meeting with the director to discuss a plan of action to increase positive behaviors for that child. If necessary, an evaluation will be recommended for that child and the office will supply contact information. Parents will be required to contact the school district within 2 weeks to set up an evaluation. Failure to respond in the situation in a timely matter will result in the child’s expulsion from the program.
- Observation Logs will be kept in the office to seek out triggers and patterns for repeated, undesired behavior as well as for usage by an evaluator upon written request from the parent.
- If aggressive or dangerous behaviors occur twice in one day, the child must be picked up from Harmony Early Learning immediately. If intolerable behaviors occur a third time in the same week, the child must be picked up from school immediately and will be required to take the next day off. If the child is sent home more than 3 times, Harmony Early Learning will give parents 2 weeks to find alternative care before the student will be dismissed from the program.

***Disruptive** - behavior(s) that interfere with the learning, socialization, personal growth of the individual, his/her peers and/or the established dynamic of the classroom and/or behaviors that become dangerous (to the safety and welfare of the individual, his/her peers and/or the established dynamic of the classroom).

****Continuously** - twice in one day and/or more than three times weekly

*****Intolerable** - includes the frequency, duration and intensity of the behavior (the Director will collect data to determine what will be considered "intolerable" behavior. Frequency, duration, and severity will be considered.)

******Uncontrollable** - behavior(s) that continue to occur after home/school collaboration has taken place and Harmony staff have implemented "a positive reinforcement approach."