



## TALKING WITH CHILDREN & BEING HEARD.

Playful English; Sandpit Play; Why Children Bite

5 Discipline Traps to Avoid

### RULES & BOUNDARIES

How can I STOP my Kindergartner from Crying at Drop-Off?

INDEPENDENCE needs to be taught



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This Parenting Magazine is an internal magazine for parents with children enrolled at International Child Care Centres SmartKids and is part of our childcare service.

With this magazine we will provide suitable guidance on general issues regarding early childhood challenges from around the world but using the individual child's social and emotional development as the main compass.

Parents around the world want what they believe is best for their children. However, parents in different cultures have different ideas of what is best. Italian parents value social and emotional abilities and having an even temperament. Spanish parents want their children to be sociable. Swedish parents value security and happiness. Dutch parents value independence, long attention spans, and predictable schedules. Vietnamese parents want to step away from the state schooling.

Differences in values cause parents to interpret actions in different ways. Asking questions is seen by American parents as a sign that the child is smart. Italian parents, who value social and emotional competence, believe that asking questions is a sign that the child has good interpersonal skills. In Asia parents and teachers are authorities, not to be argued with, or questioned.

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# Sandpit Play

There is no 'right way' to play with sand, you can play with it any way you like. When children play with sand they can dig, pour, scoop, carry, draw, make tracks, guess, count, discover things, figure things out, be creative and learn about how things happen. You will find that children can play in the sandpit on their own, next to each other or with each other.



## What do children learn while playing in the sandpit?

- Playing in the sand provides opportunities for the children to develop their muscles when they dig, shovel, lift, carry, tunnel, and rake. These kinds of activities help develop the large muscles – gross motor. Pouring, sifting, moulding, drawing, patting, and decorating all help exercise the smaller muscles – fine motor.
- Sand play also helps develop mathematical and scientific concepts such as exploring, classifying, estimating, experimenting, comparing, counting, measuring and constructing.
- While playing in the sand children use communication skills as they talk about what they are doing, how to do things. They share equipment and learn to get on with each other. They role play and work together. It also provides an opportunity for story telling in the sand.

## 2 MAIN Rules for the sandpit

**DON'T eat the sand.** ('Keep the sand away from your mouth - it's not for eating')

**DON'T throw the sand.** ('Keep the sand low or it may get in your friend's eyes')

Although children can play for hours in the sandpit it is still important to supervise them when they are playing, especially if they are using water as well.

## Play Enhancing Things to add to the sandpit

- Buckets, spades, rakes, cylinders or pipes to help make tunnels
- Old Kitchen utensils such as potato mashers, spoons, sifters, strainers, funnels etc.
- Toys such as cars, animals, add plastic tea set and kitchen toys
- Different sized containers like drink bottles, yoghurt containers, ice cream tubs
- Natural materials like rocks, large shells, bits of wood, leafy branches, water
- Flower pots, Straws, Planks of wood
- Egg cartons, Cars and trucks, Plastic animal figures

## How can you use your sandpit?

- make castles by molding with your hands, or create a beach scene
- make a birthday cake and put sticks in as candles, sing happy birthday
- do pretend cooking -add old tin pots and pans
- make moulds, make a quarry (adding water)
- Dig tunnels and then fill them with water to create rivers, creeks or dams
- Pitch a small tent in the sandpit and read the children books inside.

## Care of the sandpit

The following are some ideas on how to keep your sand pit clean and safe:

- Rake the sandpit every morning and in the afternoon.
- Keep the sandpit covered when it is not being used (shade cloth is good).
- Sunlight is the best way to sanitise a sandpit. If your sandpit is in the shade all day you could use a mild detergent or household disinfectant. Follow the instructions for washing floors and surfaces that are on the container. A watering can is a good tool to help spread the solution over the sandpit. Do not add bleach to the sand as this may cause allergic reactions in children.

It is more important to keep the sandpit clean and dry than to regularly disinfect it.

# RULES & BOUNDARIES

## Why it is so important.

One of the main roles that parents play in their child's growth and development is to provide them GUIDANCE, which inherently comes with rules and boundaries. But how to do this naturally and in a way it is not stressing?

If adequate boundaries are in place, they help to provide a framework in which a child feels safe and supported. Boundaries provide guidelines for behaviour and help children to learn what is socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They learn self-control and self-discipline and begin to set limits for themselves. In this way children are more likely to grow up into responsible, socially and emotionally mature adults than those children who have been set few or no limits.

Research has proven that children need rules/boundaries in order to grow and develop;

**Rules prepare children for the real world.** Your child will learn what is expected of him and what will happen if he doesn't comply. Having expectations of your child and enforcing consequences if the rules are broken, will help your child adapt better to new situations.

**Rules teach children how to socialise.** Some rules are basic manners; saying "please", "thank you", "excuse me".

**Rules provide a sense of order.** Certain rules can help a child remember what will come next (like washing hands before eating, putting on shoes before going outside). Young children cooperate better when they know what is required of them and that helps them gain a sense of belonging.

**Rules help to keep children safe.** Many rules are designed to protect children (hold the railing when going up/down the stairs, holding hands of an adult before crossing a street, wear a helmet on the bike, etc).

**Rules boost confidence.** If you gradually expand the limits placed on your child, he/she will become more confident about his/her growing independence and his/her ability to handle responsibility.

Young children take pride in achieving simple milestones (like putting on shoes by themselves, going to the toilet by themselves, having play-dates at a friend's house without mum, etc).

Being clear and consistent and age appropriate, helps you and your child to not feel any stress on establishing these boundaries; and most importantly realize your child is learning, which is a process where you need to help him to get used to it. It is a process to go through together.

*Literature Reference: "Why kids need rules" Marianne Neifert - KidsMatter.edu.au - Childalert.co.uk*

## Establishing Rules & Boundaries.

- Make sure the limits you set are in line with your child's development and support your child's natural drive to explore, learn and practice new skills. When possible, give an explanation for the reasons of the rules. (you can't expect your 2,5-year-old to put his toys away without being asked, but you can expect him to help you tidy up. Explain your child: "the faster we tidy – up, the earlier we can go outside".)
- Set clear consequences for breaking rules and be consistent and follow-up on what you have said. When you allow a certain kind of behaviour one day and then you don't allow this the next time, you'll confuse your child. Of course being consistent doesn't mean being inflexible – you can bend the rules once in a while under special circumstances (but explain your reason.)
- Involve children in setting basic rules. This helps them understand the value of having rules and it motivates your child to cooperate.
- You might need to discuss as a family (include nannies, drivers, grandparents!) the sort of rules/boundaries that you want to set for your child. These might include things like: talking to each other instead of shouting, asking before taking things, no hitting, putting away toys after playing with them, washing hands before eating, no television or I-pads during meals, bedtime-rituals, etc.) Many rules you want to set will depend on your own values, cultural beliefs and individual style of parenting, but it is important for your child that everyone in the family is on the same page!
- Don't be too easy or "weak" to set rules. Today, in many households the child's voice or opinion is equal to those of his/her parents. Although it is extremely important for children's emotions to be heard and validated, a parent still needs to be in charge, in order to create a secure and stable environment for their children. Parents are responsible for setting boundaries in the household, in order to foster an environment where their children can be heard, but also encouraged to develop patience, self-awareness, responsibility and independence.



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# INDEPENDENCE

## need to be taught

At birth each of us is completely dependent on others. Childhood is then an apprenticeship that gradually prepares us to handle adulthood. From infancy, children naturally reach out to the world; beginning with mom and dad. As that attachment is cemented, children seek more achievement and competence.

The major goals of a 2 years old is, controlling their body, making it do what they want it to, and getting what they want. Gradually they practice skills to help them reach those goals, such as walking and talking.

Sometimes parents have mixed feelings about children's flowering abilities. On one hand we applaud their determination to spread their wings. On the other, we cling to the closeness, dependence offers.

However encouraging developmentally appropriate self-help skills, helps children in the long run. They become more self-assured, accountable and responsible as they grow towards adulthood.

Independence contributes to the development of self-esteem, identity and wellbeing. Doing something for yourself produces a powerful sense of success. When children have opportunities to make choices, to attempt tasks for themselves, and to take on increasing responsibilities, their sense of themselves as competent members of the society grows.

It is important that a Child Care center provides children opportunities to develop the confidence to explore their world, to ask questions, to express ideas, to get things right, but also to understand that you can be wrong and that one learns from their own and others mistakes.

Curiosity, creativity and imagination, and learning processes such as inquiry, experimentation and investigation all belong to child-independence.

Teaching children self-help skills is no magic. It's most often a matter of patience and following your child. Simple self-help skills for children include attending to their own cleanliness, grooming, clothing and toys.

By including children in these activities, they will learn to contribute to the family and to take care of themselves and their personal belongings.

### Self-help Skills for Children ages 2+:

- Wash hands before eating, after toileting and playing outside.
- Use toilet as development allows, including flushing and wiping.
- Cover mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue.
- Use grooming supplies, such as a toothbrush and comb, help bathe self.

- Eat independently, using utensils and cup as abilities allow.
- Clean up own spills and messes with paper towel, sponge or child-sized broom.
- Put own garbage into trash container.
- Help make bed.
- Put dirty clothes in laundry basket; choose clean ones from drawers or on low hooks.
- Get personal toys, such as puzzles and blocks and put away after play.
- Keep track of favourite blanket or stuffed animal.
- Help with simple toy repair, like taping torn pages in a book.
- Cooperate getting into safety seat or belt.
- Cooperate with medical care, like taking temperature.
- Help put items in child care cubby.

### Home Chore Options for Children Age 4+:

- **Morning preparation:** help with tasks such as packing child care/school backpack items or clearing breakfast dishes.
- **Evening preparation:** put on pajamas, lay out clothes for morning, turn off TV.
- **Meals:** help set table, help with simple food preparation like cleaning vegetables, clear dishes, help to do the dishes.
- **Household cleaning:** dust, shake rugs, help water plants, rinse bathtub with water, wipe down counter top.
- **Garage care:** sort recyclables, sweep garage, dust car interior and wash outside with sponge and water.
- **Pet care:** feed, water, groom, exercise, put clean litter in cat box, help calm pets at vet visits.
- **Yard care:** rake leaves, sweep walk, fill birdbaths with hose.
- **Clothing care:** collect dirty laundry, sort and fold dry laundry, clean and organize shoes.
- **Errands:** get mail or newspaper, help make shopping list, help grocery shop, carry light bags.
- **Gardening:** plant, water, weed, harvest, clean fruits and vegetables.
- **Celebrations:** make gifts wrap, decorate, write invitations and "thank-you"s, help plan and prepare snacks, clean up after party.

Promoting the development of independence enables children to become active participants in their own learning as well as active and valued members of a group. Such experiences form the foundation for long-term successful learning, positive esteem and future success.

Ref.: "childcare exchange" and "early childhood Australia"





# “Playful English”

Based on an article of the Award-winning author **Opal Dunn**

Young children are natural language learners and users of languages. If they are given varied types of input opportunities right for their developmental level, they can pick up language, even when they are very young, and achieve remarkably easily.

Depending on the quality and quantity of the input, Young children pick up English easily. It is from listening that they absorb and work out how to reuse the English content.

**Without familiar styles of input, like play and copying behaviour, they find it more difficult to begin to pick up English successfully (and typical classroom teaching is not yet their familiar input style).**

If very young and young children are to reach their language learning potential within the limited classroom exposure, the teacher’s input must be well planned, and focused on the children’s age and interest.

Today most English teaching programs accept that young children need a range of activities and games from which they can learn English. However, success depends more importantly, on the quality, quantity and style of input.

Has the input been planned to fit a young child’s typical learning abilities? Do they start from the child’s level and scaffold up, gradually introducing more language?

Does the input reflect children’s love of playing with the sounds of language, similar to ways they learn their mother tongue and the way they play? Tongue twisters, jokes and simple rhymes are part of English literacy, too.

**Learning colour names in English, even if hidden in a song, is not how children learn nor are words that fit their natural conversation!**

The teacher’s task is to continually activate and reactivate young children’s natural skills as they come to their first English lessons, eager to learn to talk.

Young children expect and want immediate results.

First impressions are lasting. Skilful teachers know how to break into the children’s interest zone with easy-to-pick-up rhymes so children can go home and show how they can speak some English, even after the first lesson. They have an answer to their parent’s question: What did you learn in English today? ... and they can reply: One two three, Listen to me. One-two-three. Do this like me (copying an action).

Of course children can enjoy taking part in an activity and visual results give some degree of satisfaction to children and their parents, and can brighten up the classroom.

However, concentrating on doing an activity might be giving little opportunity for language input or natural dialogue. Silences, as children are busy in an activity, may not give opportunities to learn and use English!

If language input has not been planned, children’s opportunities to absorb English unconsciously and begin to use it are being wasted. Classroom exposure time is limited and teachers need to maximize exposure to

English. Teachers need to “TUNE IN” as children are self-educators and know how to ‘turn off’ listening to input when they feel overloaded or bored.

Within a lesson, teachers can use various types of input following a hidden syllabus. Where lessons follow a plan, picking up language is easier as children can anticipate what to expect next. This feeling of security frees them to focus on listening to input and beginning to respond, especially if the activities are routine or already known. Input language (‘Teacher Talk’) includes more repetition and putting in words about what the children do. It also includes skilful use of tone of voice, stress and intonation, showing support, facilitate understanding, adds interest and enable ways to encourage children to try to speak in English.

## The “Playful” Approach

The Playful Approach is NOT an activity or even the playing of a game. It is a planned intervention to immediately respond to the flagging interest in an activity or game by the insertion of some relevant playful language to change the mode or tone in order to sustain children’s interest in the activity or task.

The language may be supported by relevant, often exaggerated, body gestures to create surprise or add fun. Children’s response to the surprise insertion of a Playful Approach is usually immediate and the activity happily continues as planned to an acceptable ending.

### The Playful Approach:

- motivates by inserting suspense, surprise and mystery: *Oh dear! What next?*
- re-motivates when focus is lost: *Whose turn is it? Get a six. Oh no, only a two!*
- extends short attention spans: *I can see it! Look on the left!*
- arouses curiosity by inserting wonder, and challenges

- encourages: *Try again, I know you can do it.*
- challenges: *Can you ...? Are you sure you can?*
- projects enthusiasm: *Wow! I like that? Let's do it again.*
- supports exploring: *Look at the size of this sunflower plant? Is it the biggest?*

#### The Playful Approach helps the teacher to:

- sustain interest within games by inserting suspense, to speed up formal games: *Whose turn is next? It isn't mine!*
- insert a game-like atmosphere: *Let me try. Quickly, we want to see...*
- sum up progress amusingly: *You've got five cards, I've only got one!*
- predict (sometimes incorrectly) to amuse and engage: *This time I'm going to get a six. Wait and see... Oh no, no, no! It's a two!*
- insert fun when winning or losing: *You played well. You nearly won, and what about me!*

Teachers can use the voice to create a playful atmosphere in class and make children curious. Surprise changes in intonation include:

- volume – unexpected change to a whisper
- stress – added to important words
- silences – sudden, no use of language
- repetition – playfully repeating with rise in pitch and a smile: No, no, no, NO!

Teachers can also use facial 'language' to create a playful atmosphere in class. This can include:

- a fun glare to show surprise
- a smile to encourage or show enthusiasm
- blinking in an exaggerated way, to express surprise or

The skills of the Playful Approach are natural, but teachers may not have the confidence to use them as they are trained and feel that it is not an accepted method to teach. Teachers may feel that children will interpret it as 'only playing', which parents might not understand or expect to take place within an English lesson.

Parents need to understand that a young child's way of learning to communicate in English is basically the same as how they successfully taught them to speak their mother tongue.

Parents need to be helped to understand that their children are not sufficiently mature to learn in a way that perhaps they learned English in Secondary School, through a teacher instructed, analytical Grammar Method.

Young children's enthusiasm for English lessons and proof of their success is sufficient to show that the spontaneous Playful Approach has a role in all beginners' English lessons, including more formal activities introducing reading and creative writing. The inclusion of the Playful Approach gives teachers a special way to bond and sustain enthusiasm for learning English. Lifelong attitudes are known to be formed early. No wonder some adults can fondly recall the name of their first English teacher!

The Playful Approach is not a language-learning scheme or an imposed method of instruction. It is an inborn playful skill, common to many child cultures, and frequently used by adults to insert, where and when needed, some playful language which will engage and captivate the child. Although many teachers may have to dig deep to find or re-find their Playful Approach, the resulting, sustained enthusiasm for English from the children in the class will be their reward.



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# 5 Discipline Traps to Avoid

## Mistakes even smart moms make, and what to do instead

By Claire McCarthy, M.D. contributing editor; paediatrician and mom of five kids

Making mistakes is part of being a parent, and discipline is an area where we slip up constantly. It's one of our most daunting tasks, and to do it well we have to make clear, sensible, big-picture decisions at exactly the same moment when we are angry, frustrated, or embarrassed. And that's just as hard as it sounds.

After 17 years of being a mom and a paediatrician, I've been able to learn a lot about discipline from my own experiences, as well from other parents. While there are all sorts of possible blunders here are five biggies that most of us are guilty of -- and ways to avoid these common mistakes:

### 1. Thinking that One-Style-Fits-All

This one's not surprising: The bookstores are teeming with manuals, each touting an expert's best method. Friends and Grandma love to tell you what worked for them. And there is definitely something appealing about the simplicity of a one-approach-fits-all strategy. But some children freak out when you speak to them sharply, while others are unaffected. Some learn the first time you tell them something; others need so much repetition, you despair of their ever learning. Some listen right away; others need time to scream it out before you can talk to them.

And it's not just temperament; it's age and development. The job of a toddler is to push limits, to do crazy stuff that you've told him time and time again not to do. The job of a tween (roughly ages 8-14, who are "between" childhood and the teenage years) is to start asserting her independence from you, in sometimes obnoxious ways. And neither one is going to listen to a big lecture. A toddler is going to need simple, direct, quick discipline. A tween is most likely to respond to a punishment that removes her from her peers. But despite your best efforts, both the toddler and the tween are likely to keep doing the same "bad" thing for a while. Understanding where they are in life is key to picking the right approach to discipline, and preventing desperation (yours).

### 2. Over-doing it

My husband does this a lot. He has a way of getting in a bad mood when the kids are fresh (imagine that!), and he metes out punishments that are either more reflective of his mood than the crime or thoroughly unworkable, like saying "You have to stay in your room this afternoon" when he has errands to run and needs to bring the kids with him. The punishment should fit the crime, not your frustration level. And it needs to be something feasible, that doesn't overly affect siblings who've done nothing wrong.

A friend taught me a great trick. If one of the kids is doing something he shouldn't -- being mean to a sibling, for example -- I say, "There will be consequences." (It's particularly good to use in public, because while it may



strike fear into your kids, it sounds pretty benign.) Over the years, it's been shortened to "Consequences!" with the appropriate firm-but-not-yelling voice, furrowed brow, and I'm-totally-serious gaze.

If the misbehaving child doesn't stop, there are consequences, but I have a moment to think about them. Sometimes I'll ask, "What do you think your consequences should be?" It's interesting how often kids come up with a fair punishment (e.g., apologizing and letting the wronged sibling play with his favourite toy for the rest of the day).

### 3. Under-doing it

We've all been there. Little Jake is throwing sand at everybody within reach from the sandbox, and the responsible (I'm using the word loosely) grown-up is saying, distractedly, "You're going to get into trouble if you don't stop doing that." And little Jake keeps right on heaving sand because he clearly knows his mom isn't going to stop him.

Sometimes these types of kids are punished, but they're not bothered by it. "I take away his Game Boy, but he just plays with something else," their parents tell me in the office. Or they'll say, "I put her in time-out, but she just plays there." Don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating harshness. But for a punishment to work well, I explain to parents, it needs to be something your child doesn't want to have happen again. In our house, taking away favourite toys (the length of time varies with the gravity of the offense), sending the kids to their rooms (our variation on a time-out), or losing screen time (computer and/or TV) generally works. So does "No play-dates for X period of time" and, for the teenagers, "You're grounded!" Of course, every family, and every child, is different. In the office, I try to help parents think about what would be most effective; for example, taking away play-dates might work for a social kid. Or if your child loves Dora, no TV/DVD for that day will get her attention.

### 4. Being Inconsistent

Once you've said no to something, like "No throwing sand," you have to continue saying no. You can't give in sometimes ("Well, okay, you're having fun and nobody seems to mind getting it in their eyes"). Kids get confused



and pick up quickly on the fact that they have, well, latitude. If you really enjoy throwing sand, and you know that sometimes Mommy and Daddy let you, of course you're going to throw sand.

Since you don't want to say no to everything, pick your battles and decide what's really important to you. In my case, I'm not so concerned about neatness, but I won't tolerate meanness, lying, or anything violent or dangerous. Once you've decided on your rules, set them clearly and stick to them.

The other part of this is follow-through. If you take away your child's TV privileges for the day and then give in while you're making dinner because you don't want him underfoot, he'll figure out pretty soon that there's a good chance he may not get punished if he decides to break the rules.

**5. Always focusing on the negative**

Sometimes I think we parents must sound like the grown-ups in the Charlie Brown specials, all "WahWahWah." And when you've got a kid who has trouble with rules, it can make for a really difficult relationship when all you seem to do is reprimand her.

The solution is to catch your child being good. If she goes a solid 15 minutes without picking on her sister, she should get kudos. Even if it's only five minutes, try your best to notice it. You'll be surprised how effective this

can be: It's human nature to like praise, and to want to please the people we love.

This can work for you in other ways, too. As you enter a store, instead of saying, "If you don't behave, I'll be really angry and won't get you a treat," try saying, "We have to get the shopping done, and I need help. If everyone is good and helps me, we'll stop for ice cream on the way home." Think about it: Which would you rather hear?

It's not a bad idea, actually, to ask yourself variations on that question often. What would you rather hear? How would this make you feel? Granted, you're a grown-up, and would probably need to be told only once not to bite. But asking yourself questions reminds you that your kids aren't just crazy beasts put on this earth to make you insane (although it feels that way sometimes) and that discipline isn't just about keeping order. Discipline is about keeping our children safe -- and helping them grow up to be kind, successful, happy adults.

So the next time your child is the one throwing sand in the sandbox, take a deep breath. As you scoop her up and think about what might work this time (since your last method didn't), remember that she is little and has so much yet to learn. And, most of all, remember that you love her. Because that, more than anything else, is what discipline is really about.

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# How can I STOP my Kindergartner from Crying at Drop-Off?!

## QUESTION:

My 3-year-old cries every day when we drop her off at kindergarten. I have talked to her teacher and she tells me, "Rest assured, once you leave she stops crying." But it has been two weeks since school started and it's the same thing every day. Do you have any ideas or suggestions?

## ANSWER:

This is an extremely common problem and one that is easily remedied with the passage of time. Going to kindergarten for the first time can be overwhelming for little ones, especially if they are not used to being away from home. It can also be overwhelming for parents, who feel anxious about being separated from their children for such long periods. Here are a few things you can do to make the process easier for her (and yourself!).

**FIRST**, ensure that your little one is getting adequate sleep each night. Poor sleep can lead to mood swings, behaviour problems and even learning difficulties. According to the research, school-aged children require 10-11 hours of sleep each night, so keep a consistent bedtime routine for your child. In the morning, wake her early enough so that she can get ready for school in a relaxed fashion and enjoy a healthy breakfast. Play a favourite CD in the car on the way to school; allowing your child to choose a few songs may relax her.

**SECOND**, monitor your own reactions to your child's distress. Children are amazingly perceptive when it comes to their parents' emotions, and your daughter is likely sensing your feelings of concern. This may fuel her anxiety and her desire to stay close to you. Lingering at drop-off time, while understandable, is likely to backfire. It is likely that by delaying your own departure you are reinforcing her tearful behaviour. Your best bet is to give her a quick hug and tell her you'll see her at pick-up time. Then, be on your way. Have a plan to assuage your own nerves, such as calling a trusted friend as you leave school or stopping for a coffee

Dr. Stacie Bunning, clinical psychologist



## 12 Tips for handling this Separation Anxiety

### 1. Be Patient.

While it can be frustrating when someone else says it, the saying, "this too shall pass" is really true. This is merely a stage in your child/family development. It will feel long and arduous when you are in the midst of it, but in years to come it will be just a blip in your child's life. Don't get frustrated with your child. They aren't doing anything wrong. They are just reacting to their natural and normal instincts of desiring to be close to those who protect them.

### 2. Don't trivialize or demean your child because of separation anxiety.

Statements such as "grow up" or "get over it" or "stop acting like a baby" will only further hurt your child, making them feel more alone and insecure.

### 3. Watch your own reactions.

If you become nervous or anxious because of your child's behaviour, it can fuel his anxiety. Calmly acknowledge their anxiety and explain that you must leave. Tell him where you are going, reassure your child that you will return and, if possible, let him know when you will return.

### 4. Let your child know that everyone is nervous on their first day of school.

Many times, children believe they are the only person that feels the fear of going to kindergarten. Your child may feel better knowing he is not the only one who is scared and these feelings are normal.

### 5. Show confidence in your child.

Even if you are worried about whether your child will have a hard time going off to school, let him know you believe he

will do fine and have fun at school. He will be more willing to believe this if you believe it.

#### 6. Talk about other times your child has managed when you had to go out.

If you have gone shopping or out with your spouse for the evening, remind your child that he got through that time and he will make it through the school day as well.

#### 7. Prepare your Child

Talk about the exciting event of going to Kindergarten, take him/her some times for a pre-visit, go to Parent child mornings to taste together the atmosphere and smooth the day he/she goes alone. Have your child help to pack his back-pack . Keep this time positive, talking about all the fun times he will have at school.

#### 8. Slow Introductions.

If you know in advance that you are going to have to leave your little one at a kindergarten, make sure there is a clear settling in period, where your child and the caregiver can begin to build a relationship. Remember, even if it's Grandma or another relative, the child is still going to prefer you. They are too little to really care that the person with them is family and has good intentions, they just know that it isn't mama( or daddy). Encourage some bonding while you are present to make them still feel secure; but at the same time be clear in you distancing yourself.

#### 9. Don't Be Sneaky.

Remember you are the one who your child trusts, so be honest and open and don't break this trust bond by sneaking away, coz you think he/she does not notice your departure.

Saying "Calm down!", "Don't be afraid!", "You'll be fine!" are not very effective and may make your child more

distressed. Instead, using a calm soothing tone, say "I see that you are having a hard time. We'll work through this together", "Let's see what is in your new classroom.", "Your teacher is over there and looks so happy to see all the children!", "Let's see if we can find your courage." are examples of simple sentences to state over and over. If your child is irritated by hearing these types of verbal encouragements, instead convey your belief in them through your patient body language and steady tone.

#### 10. Don't drag out the good-byes.

While this is hard, you don't want to leave a crying child, dragging it out can increase his anxiety and yours. Give him a hug, a reminder that you believe in him, and reassurance you will be waiting for him when the school day is over.

#### 11. Keep Your Word.

If you tell your toddler that you will be back after their nap, then be back when they wake up. They are too little to understand that Mommy decided to swing into a shop on the way back because of a great sale and got detoured for an extra 30 minutes. They only know that you aren't there when you said that you would be. Of course, there are times when delays are unavoidable, but don't derail your return with frivolous things that can wait until another time.

#### 12. Shower Them with Love, Praise, and Affection.

When you return home, make sure to give lots of comforting hugs and kisses. Let them know that just because you left, doesn't mean you aren't still there for them. If they do well while you are gone, praise their efforts. Positive reinforcement can go a long way and reassurance of your love and presence is an absolute must.

DO's	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve the teacher. You need someone on the other end who will greet your child and ease the transition.</li> <li>• Send clear messages. Your child needs to know that you expect him to go to school no matter how much he fusses, cries or stamps his feet.</li> <li>• Believe in your child's ability to make positive changes.</li> <li>• Keep your good-byes short and sweet. In doing so, you convey the message that you have confidence in your child's ability to cope.</li> <li>• Develop loving good-bye routines. We invented a kiss-hug-nose-rub routine that we both enjoy.</li> <li>• Invite children from the class over, so your child can forge friendships that will make the transition easier.</li> <li>• Ask your spouse or another family member to take a turn dropping your child off, or pick up one of your child's classmates on the way to school, and your problems may disappear with lightning speed.</li> <li>• Tuck a family picture or a loving reminder away in your child's backpack for her to look at later in the day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your child home (or allow him/her to stay at home). If you do, you send the message that if your child cries enough he/she won't have to stay.</li> <li>• Hover around. Your child will sense your anxiety, and this will make it more difficult for him/her to calm down.</li> <li>• Get upset. By keeping an upbeat and positive attitude about your child's school, teacher and friends, you'll help your child feel safe and enjoy his time at school.</li> <li>• Bargain or bribe your child to behave. Your little one should be allowed his/her feelings.</li> <li>• Sneak out. You want your child to know unequivocally that he/she can trust you.</li> <li>• Discuss problems with the teacher in the morning. Save conversations and questions for the end of the day.</li> <li>• Be surprised if you solve the problem and it reoccurs after holidays and sick days.</li> </ul>

#### Remember:

**Separation anxiety means that a strong and loving bond exists between you and your child.**



## Biting

# Why Children Bite

Biting is alarming to parents because we don't expect our children to be bitten - or to bite. We think of biting as a vicious act, not as something a small child would do.

### Why does biting happen? What can and should be done?

Parents and caregivers who have been successful in dealing with biting have found that it helps to start with some basic understandings:

- As upsetting and as wrong as it is, biting is not unusual toddler behavior, especially when toddlers are in groups.
- Toddlers bite for many reasons, most of which are related to the development of children at this age.
- When toddlers bite, the most effective way to get them to stop is an approach that combines observation, understanding, teaching, and environmental changes.

### Reasons Toddlers May Bite

The reasons toddlers may bite fall into three general categories:

- Biting related to development
- Biting related to expressing feelings
- Biting related to a difficult environment



### Development

Toddler development has been described as an "explosion" because toddlers develop so many new skills and abilities at once. They are driven to try out their new abilities, like getting other people to understand what they are saying, which can be frustrating, and they need help from adults. All of this can result in a toddler becoming overwhelmed, which may cause her/him to bite. Toddlers may also bite as a result of

- teething pain;
- experimenting with the movement of their mouths as they learn to chew and swallow without choking;

- exploring everything around them using all their senses - including mouthing toys and people;
- feeling that others are too close because they don't yet have a good understanding of the space around them;
- their developing autonomy - that is, feeling a sense of independence and power;
- struggling to be understood as they learn to talk;
- imitating adults who say they love them so much, they could "just eat you up".

### Expressing feelings

Toddlers are easily frustrated and do not have much self-control. They are likely to bite when they are feeling

- Frustrated or angry;
- Anxious or tense about situations they don't understand;
- Excited even for happy reasons.



### Environment

Toddlers may bite when they are in environments that don't meet their physical and emotional needs. They bite when they experience

- Overstimulation and overcrowding;
- Inappropriate expectations, such as having to wait;
- A schedule that doesn't meet their needs.

### Best Responses to Biting

In a child care setting, adults must respond to both the child who bit and the child who was bitten.

#### The child who was bitten needs:

- **comfort and care** - This includes first aid for the bite and tender comforting. When the skin is not broken, caregivers should offer ice or cold packs to relieve the pain of the bite. When the skin is broken, first aid should include careful washing of the wound and, if the child wants, ice or cold packs for the pain.
- **reassurance and recognition** - The child needs to hear that it was not right and not fair that he was bitten. Teachers should tell the child, "Someone bit you. That's not right. It hurts, and no one should bite you." Even though adults may want the child who bit to apologize, apologizing doesn't make much of an impression on toddlers and doesn't help stop the biting.
- **advice and support** - If the child is able to talk, teachers can help her/him learn to loudly say "no" or "stop" if she/he is worried someone will hurt her/him. The child can also learn to put up her hand, palm out, like a traffic officer. This is also powerful "stop" message,

teacher can support her. "Good for you. You were worried someone might hurt you, and you said, 'no'". If a child is bitten as a result of retaliation by another child, the teacher can help the bitten child understand the situation. "When you hit him, he bites you. We don't want to hurt anyone - hitting or biting." Saying this doesn't suggest the child deserved to be bitten, but does relate important information to him because, like all toddlers, he is learning about cause and effect.

#### The Child who bites needs:

- **a clear message of disapproval** - No matter the reason for the bite, biting is never the right thing to do. Adults must use a serious tone of voice and specific words so that the child knows what he/she did was wrong. The message must be brief, specific, and serious.
- **an understanding of how biting has affected the other child** - The child needs to know that his bite hurt the other child, and that it's not okay to hurt people. It is important for the child to understand the effect of his biting. Adults need to talk about this in a manner that is clear, calm, serious, and brief.
- **advice about what she/he should do instead of biting** - Adults should teach the child how to ask for what she/he wants. Adults should help the child learn how to communicate feelings of power by expressing her/herself through body language, facial expression, and words rather than through biting.
- **redirection or resulting action that relates to the reason for the bite** - For example, if a child bit in order to get a toy away from another child, the toy should be taken away from the biter.
- **adults to look at the situation and the environment** - Adults need to consider the reasons the child bit and possible changes they might make to address them. For example, the environment maybe crowded, so adults could rearrange the room to provide more space. Or, there may not be enough sensory activities to help toddlers relieve frustration and anxiety, so adults could add sensory materials and experiences.

*Centers that are serious about working on biting keep the name of the child who bit confidential. This helps the teachers focus all their energy on strategies to help the child rather than on naming and blaming.*

#### If Your Child Is Being Bitten

No matter how much any of us knows and understands about biting, it is still frightening and upsetting when our own child is bitten. Parents may want to focus their attention on punishing the child who bit or even on punishing the child's parents. This is understandable, but it doesn't help the biting situation.

If your child has been bitten, here are ways you can help:

- Ask your child's teachers what strategies they are using to help the child who bit learn to stop.
- Ask your child's teachers what strategies they are using to help keep your child safe. If the teachers mention

specific advice and support, use the same ideas and language when you talk with your child.

- Take your cue from your child. If your child seems worried, let her/him hear you talk with the teacher about how you will both help keep her/him safe. If she/he seems to have forgotten the biting, do not keep bringing it up. Instead, if you still have concerns, talk with the teacher by yourself.

#### If Your Child Is Biting

You may feel responsible for your toddler's biting and want to do something about it at home. Nevertheless, most of the work will be done in your child's program because that's where the biting is happening. Toddlers are more likely to bite when they are in groups than when they are at home.

Here are ways you can help your child's teachers as they work on the biting:

- Share any ideas you may have about the reasons your child is biting.
- If you play with your child by pretending to "I can eat you," stop for a while because he/she may be trying to imitate you while actually biting.
- Learn how to effectively express disapproval for biting.
- Help your child develop language skills and learn to appropriately express her/his feelings.
- Avoid lectures, punishments, rewards, or bribes. They don't help to stop the biting.

*Adapted from: Redleaf Press. 2009 Child Care Solutions, Inc.*



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# Talking with children & being Heard.

Some wonderful tips which will help you to talk with your child and ensure that they listen.

## Connect Before You Direct

Before giving your child directions, squat to your child's eye level and engage your child in eye-to-eye contact to get his attention. Teach him how to focus: "Mary, I need your eyes." "Billy, I need your ears." Offer the same body language when listening to the child. Be sure not to make your eye contact so intense that your child perceives it as controlling rather than connecting.



## Address The Child

Open your request with the child's name, "Lauren, will you please..."

## Stay Brief

We use the one-sentence rule: Put the main directive in the opening sentence. The longer you ramble, the more likely your child is to become parent-deaf.

Too much talking is a very common mistake when discussing an issue. It gives the child the feeling that you're not quite sure what it is you want to say. If she can keep you talking she can get you sidetracked.

## Stay Simple

Use short sentences with one-syllable words. Listen to how kids communicate with each other and take note. When your child shows that glazed, disinterested look, you are no

longer being understood.

Ask Your Child to Repeat the Request Back to You If he can't, it's too long or too complicated.

## Make an offer the child can't refuse

You can reason with a two or three-year-old, especially to avoid power struggles. "Get dressed so you can go outside and play." Offer a reason for your request that is to the child's advantage, and one that is difficult to refuse. This gives her a reason to move out of her power position and do what you want her to do.



## Be Positive

Instead of "no running," try: "Inside we walk, outside you may run."

## Begin your Directives With "I want"-("I would like you to")

Instead of "Get down," say "I want you to get down."

Instead of "Let Becky have a turn," say "I want you to let Becky have a turn now." This works well with children who want to please but don't like being ordered. By saying "I want," you give a reason for compliance rather than just an order.

## "When...Then."

"When you get your teeth brushed, then we'll begin the story." "When your work is finished, then you can watch TV." "When," which implies that you expect obedience, works better than "if," which suggests that the child has a choice when you don't mean to give him one.

## Legs First, Mouth Second

Instead of hollering, "Turn off the TV, it's time for dinner!" walk into the room where your child is watching TV, join in with your child's interests for a few minutes, and then, during a commercial break, have your child turn off the TV. Going to your child conveys you're serious about your request; otherwise children interpret this as a mere preference.

## Giving Choices - keep it simple

"Do you want to put your pajamas on or brush your teeth first?" "Red shirt or blue one?"



## Speak Developmentally Correctly

The younger the child, the shorter and simpler your directives should be. Consider your child's level of understanding. For example, a common error parents make is asking a three-year-old, "Why did you do that?" Most adults can't always answer that question about their

behavior. Try instead, "Let's talk about what you did."

### Speak Socially Correctly

Even a two-year-old can learn "please." Expect your child to be polite. Children shouldn't feel manners are optional. Speak to your children the way you want them to speak to you.

### Speak Psychologically Correctly

Threats and judgmental openers are likely to put the child on the defensive. "You" messages make a child clam up. "I" messages are non-accusing. Instead of "You'd better do this..." or "You must..." try "I would like..." or "I am so pleased when you..." Instead of "You need to clear the table," say "I need you to clear the table." Don't ask a leading question when a negative answer is not an option. "Will you please pick up your coat?" Just say, "Pick up your coat, please."



### Talk The Child Down

The louder your child yells, the softer you respond. Let your child ventilate while you interject timely comments: "I understand" or "Can I help?" Sometimes just having a caring listener available will wind down the tantrum. If you come in at his level, you have two tantrums to deal with. Be the adult for him.

### Settle The Listener

Before giving your directive, restore emotional equilibrium, otherwise you are wasting your time. Nothing sinks in when a child is an emotional wreck.

### Replay Your Message

Toddlers need to be told a thousand times. Children under two have difficulty internalizing your directives. Most three-year-olds begin to internalize directives so that what you ask begins to sink in. Do less and less repeating as your child gets older.

### Let Your Child Complete The Thought

Instead of "Don't leave your mess piled up," try: "Matthew, think of where you want to store your soccer stuff." Letting the child fill in the blanks is more likely to create a lasting lesson.

### Use Rhyme Rules

"If you hit, you must sit." Get your child to repeat them.



### Give Likable Alternatives

You can't go by yourself to the park; but you can play in the neighbor's yard.

### Give Advance Notice

"We are leaving soon. Say bye-bye to the toys, bye-bye to the girls..."

### Open Up a Closed Child

Carefully chosen phrases open up closed little minds and mouths. Stick to topics that you know your child gets excited about. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no. Stick to specifics. Instead of "Did you have a good day at school today?" try "What is the most fun thing you did today?"

### Use "When You...I Feel...Because..."

When you run away from mommy in the store I feel worried because you might get lost.

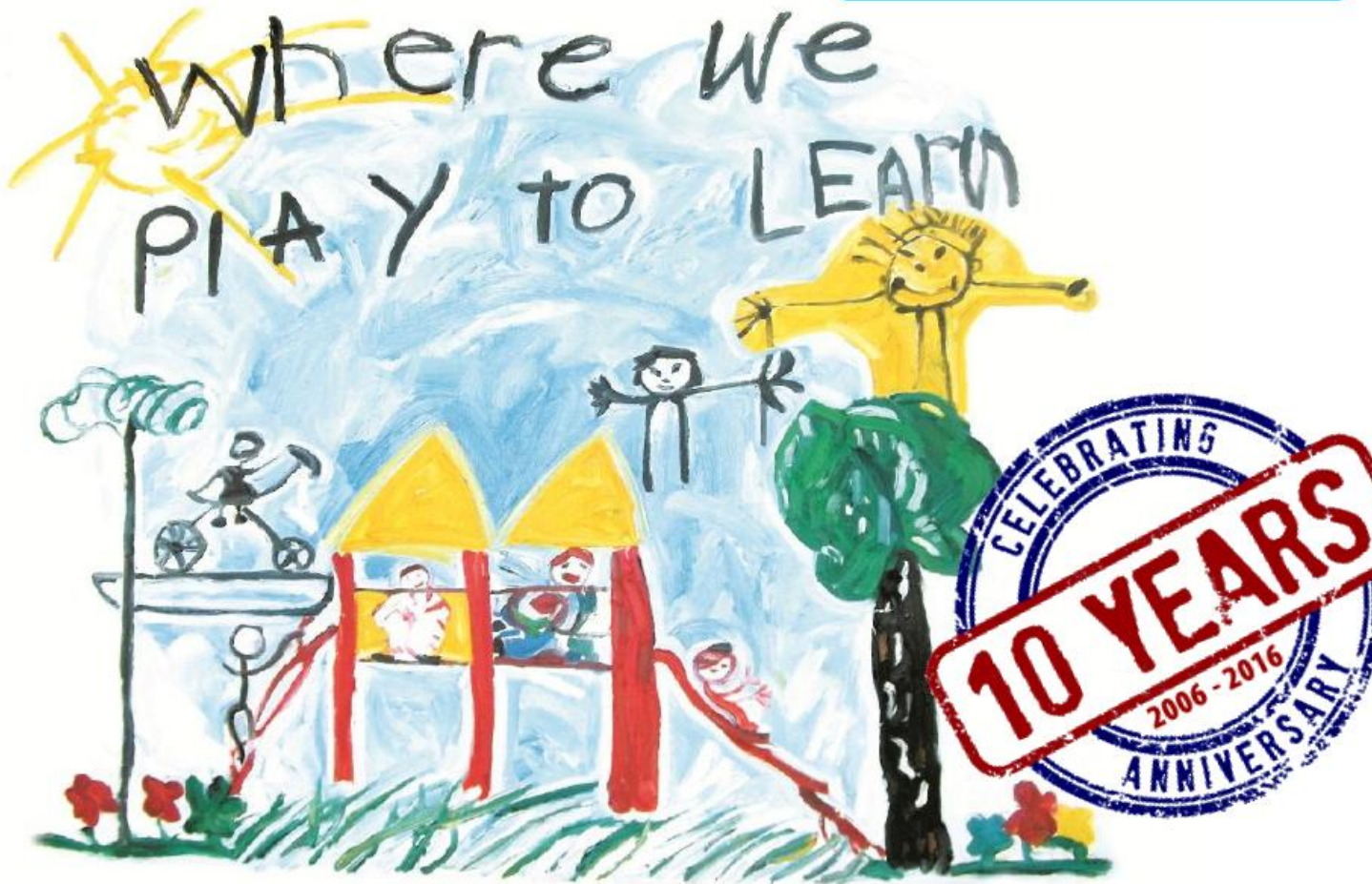
### Close The Discussion

If a matter is really closed to discussion, say so. "I'm not changing my mind about this. Sorry." You'll save wear and tear on both you and your child. Reserve your "I mean business" tone of voice for when you do.



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