



The Down Syndrome Association Gauteng

PARENT NOTE#7

WHEN CHILDREN BITE

Acknowledgement:

Wietske Boon. Play Therapist

Small children have not yet learned how to communicate their needs and emotions effectively, thus they might bite or pinch their friends to give them the message that they are not approving of the current situation. In most of these cases the child is feeling angry, frustrated, irritated or even overly excited. They have a feeling that needs to be expressed – NOW!

A few reasons why children bite their friends

- In most of the cases a friend did something the child didn't approve of and the child sends his friend a message by biting (or pinching) him. He gets his friend's attention for sure!
- Children thrive on structure and routine. When there is a chaotic environment, he feels as if everything around him is out of control and he might seek a way to get rid of his anxiety and discomfort.
- Overstimulation makes children feel irritated and tired which can also cause a child to behave inappropriately.
- Leaving your child with nothing to do leads to boredom and as you know, 'boredom is the devil's new playground'.
- When a child is experiencing stress due to changes in the family, trauma or any other reason, he might bite a friend to redirect his own frustrations, anger or sadness.
- Diet also plays an important role in children's behaviour. A child eating too much sugary foods and carbohydrates gets irritated easier.
- Tiredness and hunger make a child feel irritated, which is enough reason to lash out towards the person closest to him or her.
- There are instances where children use biting to manipulate and test the boundaries.

To read the complete article visit: wietske@childtherapist.co.za

www.childtherapist.co.za

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