# Biting, Bullies and Other Bad Behavior - How to handle it? - Parents role

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Parents and professionals are realizing that antisocial behavior begins early in life and without intervention can easily snowball into a much bigger problem. When a child is biting, bullying and consistently behaving badly at school, the adults must monitor, teach and model to the child a better way of handling his or her emotions and behavior.

If you want to teach a child to stop biting, bullying and doing other bad behavior, these strategies can help:

**Stop the problem while it's small.**

Some adults think children should be left alone to work out their problems with other children without adult interference. Self-enforced problem-solving may work for children who have been specifically trained and are able to solve problems without resorting to aggressive behavior. If a child hasn't been able to resolve problems without whacking, biting or bullying his or her neighbor, parents should intervene as soon as the behavior appears. If you wait until the fourth or sixth time before your prompt your child to stop, the problem may escalate.

**Use swift and meaningful consequences.**

Remove any doubt from your child's mind that when you say "No" to biting, bullying or bad behavior, you mean it. Follow through on the consequences you give to your child for misbehaving. Use consequences that are immediate, reasonable in size, important to your child and show a relationship to the behavior.

For instance, if the preschool teacher calls to say little Johnny has bitten a classmate, use a combination of small consequences to get your point across, such as saying "Johnny, biting is not nice. Because you were not nice and bit Marcos, you will give him your sweet snack tomorrow and tell him you're sorry. Instead of watching television tonight, you can draw an apology card that you will share with Marcos when you give him your snack."

**Train your child to do something else instead.**

Often, children respond to their emotions without thinking about what they should do instead. Parents and caregivers will need to take the time to help children replace bad behaviors with more acceptable ones. Practice several times a day with your child. Play games that teach cooperation. Role-play using stuffed animals to show how to solve emotional situations and read stories that show how to resolve problems. Monitor children who have trouble controlling their behavior. Quickly redirect them to do something else as soon as you notice they aren't properly handling the situation. Later, return to the problem and practice what to do instead.

**Reinforce your child's efforts.**

Make sure you notice when your child uses positive, alternative behavior or refrains from responding negatively in a situation. Praise and encourage him or her consistently for good behavior. Use charts to monitor the growth in ability to control his or her emotions. Charts can help put problems in perspective and set up a routine to encourage your child's improvement. Remember: It is not necessary to pay off good behavior with tangible rewards. Spending time with your child may be all the reward the child needs to change his or her behavior.

**Model leadership skills, and change the play environment.**

Children's behavior improves sooner when they are near adults who model what to do. Be an example for your child on how to get along with others. Visit your child's school, and talk with his or her teachers about playtime and classroom activities. Discuss ways to change playtime activities. Children who are bullying others should be closely monitored. Be certain to identify where and when the biting, bullying or bad behavior occurs most frequently. Change the routine: Mix age groups, and shorten adult response times when problems occur.

Source: <https://www.boystown.org/parenting/article/Pages/biting-bullies-and-other-bad-behavior-at-preschool.aspx>