



## Does Your Toddler Bite?

Biting is a natural behavior for very young children—and a big challenge for parents! If your toddler is biting, don't worry. He is just beginning to learn how to get along with others. You can teach him better ways to act out his feelings and get what he needs.

### Reasons why a toddler bites:

- He is exploring things—even people—with his mouth and teeth. Oral stimulation is an important way for infants and toddlers to learn about their environment.
- He may be teething, and biting makes his gums feel better. Unfortunately he is not concerned with what it is he bites down on.
- He doesn't have the words to say what he wants or needs. Children are unable to negotiate to solve problems that often occur when engaging in play together.
- He may be feeling tense or excited. Biting may be a reflexive reaction to these feelings.
- He may want some extra attention. A child may bite in order to get a reaction from that child, other children, his parent or caregiver.

- He may be responding to another child's aggression or defending his possessions. The impulse to bite is a natural defense some toddlers use when they feel cornered or threatened and haven't learned more refined ways to protect and defend themselves or their property.
- He is interested in seeing the effects of his actions. He is curious to simply find out what happens when he takes this action.
- He may be mimicking other children or TV characters that bite. Children learn by imitating others. When one child bites and gets attention, another child may mimic the action in an attempt to get the same attention for himself.

### Ways to discourage biting:

These techniques are helpful for preventing other aggressive behaviors as well.

- Provide teething toys, frozen breadsticks, and other safe objects to chew on.
- Avoid "gonna eat you up"

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Check out the **Bright Beginnings**

**website** online at:

[www.kentisd.org/brightbeginnings](http://www.kentisd.org/brightbeginnings)

**For a listing of additional birth to five services**, visit: [www.migreatparents.org](http://www.migreatparents.org)

You will see a map of Michigan. Click on Kent County.

# Does Your Toddler Bite - Continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

Games and affectionate nibbling on fingers and toes. These activities send mixed messages about biting.

- Closely supervise your toddler in social situations.
- Watch him for signs of rising frustration or tension
- Give him outlets for his tension, frustration, anger, and

excitement.

- Teach him words he can use to express his needs- “Stop that!”, or “Don’t take my toy! “
- Show him better ways to get attention– saying “help” or patting someone’s arm instead of biting.
- “Catch” your child when he’s treating others nicely and tell him how well he’s doing.

Remember, your child learns self-control and kindness by watching you! When a child bites, the last thing he needs to feel is shame, fear or anger from his parent. He most needs support from a loved one, to help him find alternative ways to get his needs met. Attention should be paid to the biters feelings of frustration as well as his actions, and should be done in a loving way.

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## Health & Safety— A Heads Up on Baby’s Head Shape

Your baby has a tender little head. The six bones that make up the skull are not yet fused together. Your baby spends a lot of time on her back. You put her on her back to sleep to help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Since babies sleep a lot, they are in this position much of the day. She also lays on her back in her car seat, stroller, infant carrier, swing, bouncy chair and in your arms. Babies can develop a flat spot on the back or side of its head because of the moldable skull rests on a flat surface so much. The term for this flat spot is a plagiocephaly. Having a flat spot doesn’t hurt your baby’s brain. However, it can cause the neck muscles on one side of your baby’s body to tighten, which can cause motor delays and may require physical

therapy to correct. Also, there may be long-term changes in the shape of the skull, which can affect the baby’s facial features.

There are several effective things you can do to prevent a flat area on your baby’s head.

\*Each night, place your baby on her back at opposite ends of the crib. She will usually turn her head so that she can see out into the room.

\*Give your baby as much time on her tummy as possible during waking hours. Her neck and back will become stronger and her head will be off any surface. Stay with her when she is on her tummy.

\*Lie down and place your baby on her tummy on your chest. She will pick up her head to look at your face.

\*Carry your baby face down with her tummy

on your forearm and support her head in your hand. This is the football carry.

\*If you bottle feed your baby, hold her in one arm for part of the feeding and then switch her to your other arm.

\*If you notice your baby always hold her head turned to one side while she is sleeping, gently turn her head to the opposite side.

(Taken from parents as teachers Nutrition & Fitness of Young Children



## LAUGH N LEARN FAMILY APPRECIATION EVENT

*Early On*® and Bright Beginnings Family Appreciation Event in collaboration with:  
**Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park**  
**1000 E. Beltline NE**  
**Monday May 21, 2012**  
**5:00pm-7:30pm rain or shine**

\* Explore Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

\* Activities include art, music, nature, traveling zoo, story time and light snacks for children

\* Access to Lena Meijer Children’s Garden

\* Hearing and vision screening available for children 6 months to 5 years of age

\* Free admission for families of children enrolled in Bright Beginnings or *Early On*®

*For question regarding this event please call 616-365-2277*

# Parent Page

As the Bright Beginnings program expands, we are able to offer more opportunities for families. Please note our calendar of events, which includes a listing of all playgroups available in Kent County through the Bright Beginnings program.

You are welcome to attend playgroups in any school district. This enables you to benefit from more opportunities to meet other parent educators and families from neighboring districts. Feel free to attend any/all playgroups that you would like.

The following is a list of Parent Educators, including the districts in which they work.

Beth Anderson 293-8623  
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Grandville

Wendy Bronkema 889-3687  
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Sparta/Kenowa Hills

Valerie Dykstra 889-0760  
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Byron Center

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Godfrey-Lee/GRPS—Wellerwood

Carol Gray 889-0544  
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Caledonia

Esther Gomez 889-0784  
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GRPS— Buchanan Elementary

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GRPS— Ken O Sha

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Comstock Park

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Kathy Watrous 318-8876  
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Forest Hills

Staci Zuspann 890-1710  
stacizuspann@kentisd.org  
Kentwood

## Parent Educator Coordinator

Jan Sabin 365-2276  
jansabin@kentisd.org



## Eat Smart—Play Hard! Mom’s Turn for Fitness

Here are some things to consider as you plan for your fitness after the birth of your baby.

\* Keep it simple. The important thing is to get moving. If your exercise plans are too complicated or time-consuming you may skip them or give them up.

\* Take your baby. A good way to begin is to put your baby in her

stroller and take a walk around the park. Look for baby-and-mom exercise groups or gyms that offer child care.

\* Exercise with a friend. Find other new mothers who have the same goals as you do and plan to exercise together. Join a class or group that fits your needs.

\* Keep it fun. You have enough to think about with a new baby. Do something that is relaxing and enjoy-

able to ease your stress.

\*Set realistic goals. If you can’t exercise every day because you don’t have someone to look after the baby, set a goal to get moving on the weekend. Doing something is better than doing nothing and, hard as it is to believe, things will get better soon.

\* Ask for help. Trade babysitting with another mom so each of you can exercise.



Little Lives Big Dreams Bright Futures

Bright Beginnings is a partnership between Kent ISD and local school districts in Kent County

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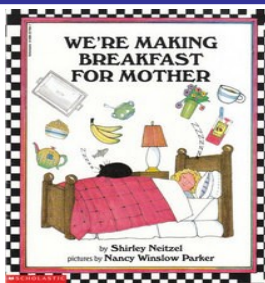
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**Kent ISD** We lead learning

## Bright Beginnings *Book of the Month*



### We're Making Breakfast for Mother

**Written by Shirley Neitzel**  
**Illustrated by Nancy Winslow Parker**

It's Mother's Day, and two children are preparing a breakfast feast for their unsuspecting mother -- to be served in bed, of course. The family wants her to have a super day, but when things don't turn out as intended;

mother knows how to save the day. Your children will learn the importance of eating breakfast, the fun of meal preparation, and the value of sharing a meal.

#### **Activities for children aged birth to three:**

- Give your child a picnic set and pretend food. Allow them to pretend that they are serving you breakfast in bed

Talk about the different foods that are in the book and how they are good for your body and your brain.

#### **Activities for children aged three to five:**

- Collect items for re-

enacting the story. Have a special Mother's Day celebration. Encourage your children to make placemats, set tables, and serve a breakfast that they can make.

- Talk to your child about the importance of a healthy breakfast. When we eat a healthy breakfast our bodies are stronger and full of energy and our brains are ready to make good decisions for the day.

- Try a new recipe with your child. Discuss which recipes are more healthy.

