

CATEGORY: Health & Safety Policies and Procedures	DATE: July 2017
SUBJECT: Human Biting Incidents	REVIEWED: August 2026
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Policy Statement

Centennial Infant and Child Centre (CICC) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families, staff, students, and volunteers. CICC will take every reasonable precaution to prevent injury, reduce the risk of infection, and respond appropriately to human biting incidents.

CICC recognizes that biting may occur among young children as part of development, communication, sensory needs, emotional regulation, teething, or social interactions. Staff will use proactive supervision and supportive, developmentally appropriate strategies to reduce the occurrence of biting incidents.

CICC follows current Toronto Public Health (TPH) guidance regarding human biting incidents, infection prevention and control, and blood and body fluid exposure.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff, students, and volunteers understand their responsibilities when responding to human biting incidents involving children or adults.

This policy outlines procedures for:

- Prevention and response
- First aid and infection prevention
- Communication with families
- Confidentiality
- Documentation
- Follow-up and prevention strategies

Scope

This policy applies to all CICC staff, students, volunteers, and individuals responsible for supervising children.

The procedures apply to biting incidents involving children, staff, students, volunteers, or other individuals at CICC.

Definitions

- **Human Biting Incident:** An incident where one person bites another person, whether or not the skin is broken.

- **Biter:** The individual who bites another person.
- **Bitee:** The individual who is bitten.

Prevention

Staff will support the prevention of biting incidents by:

- Providing appropriate supervision
- Recognizing situations, activities, or interactions that may lead to biting
- Supporting children's communication and emotional regulation
- Recognizing and responding to children's cues and escalating emotions
- Redirecting children before incidents occur, where possible
- Teaching children safe and appropriate ways to express needs and feelings
- Providing developmentally appropriate support for children who are having trouble communicating or regulating
- Documenting patterns and implementing strategies, when required
- Working collaboratively with families and appropriate professionals when biting is recurring.

Staff will respond to biting incidents in a calm and supportive manner, using developmentally appropriate strategies.

Procedure

When a biting incident occurs, staff shall:

1. Ensure the safety of all individuals involved.
2. Separate the individuals calmly and safely.
3. Reassure and comfort the individual who was bitten.
4. Respond to the individual who bit in a calm and supportive manner.
5. Provide first aid as required.
6. Determine whether the skin has been broken and whether blood is present.
7. Follow the procedures below based on whether the skin is broken.
8. Assess whether any blood or body fluid exposure has occurred.
9. Notify the Manager or designate.
10. Notify parents/guardians of the children involved as soon as possible.
11. Complete required documentation.
12. Identify any appropriate follow-up or prevention strategies.

Confidentiality

Information relating to a human biting incident must be kept confidential and shared only with individuals who require the information to provide care, respond to the incident, complete required documentation, provide follow-up, or meet legal, regulatory, or public health requirements.

Staff must not disclose one individual's identity, health information, immunization status, or medical history with another individual or family.

Documentation must be factual and objective.

Skin Not Broken

Staff shall:

- Perform hand hygiene and put on gloves
- Clean the affected area with soap and water
- Apply a cold compress, if appropriate
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene
- Put on clean gloves and rinse the biter's mouth with water or provide a drink of water, as appropriate
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene
- Clean and disinfect any contaminated surfaces or equipment, as required
- Notify the parents/guardians of the children involved as soon as possible
- Complete an Accident/Injury Report
- Record the incident in the Daily Written Record

Skin Broken

Staff shall:

- Perform hand hygiene and put on gloves
- Observe and assess both children to determine whether blood is present
- If bleeding occurs, allow the wound to bleed gently without squeezing
- Clean the wound thoroughly with soap and water
- Apply a cold compress, if appropriate
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene
- Put on clean gloves and rinse the biter's mouth with water or provide a drink of water, as appropriate
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene
- Clean and disinfect any contaminated surfaces or equipment, as required
- Notify the parents/guardians of the children involved as soon as possible
- Advise parents/guardians to seek medical advice regarding post-exposure concerns
- Complete an Accident/Injury Report
- Record the incident in the Daily Written Record

Blood-Borne Infection Exposure

If either individual involved is known to have Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, or another relevant blood-borne infection:

- Report the incident to Toronto Public Health as soon as possible
- Follow any additional recommendations provided by Toronto Public Health
- Maintain the confidentiality of all individuals involved
- Document any required follow-up

Adults who experience a bite that breaks the skin should seek medical advice, particularly if they are unsure of their Hepatitis B immunization status or have concerns regarding the wound or potential blood-borne infection exposure.

Communication With Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians of children directly involved in a biting incident will be notified as soon as possible.

Communication with families shall:

- Be factual and objective
- Describe the incident without assigning blame
- Indicate whether the skin was broken
- Describe the first aid provided
- Advise when medical follow-up may be appropriate
- Protect the confidentiality of the other individual involved

Staff must not disclose:

- The name of the other individual
- Identifying information about the other individual or family
- The other individual's medical history
- The other individual's immunization status
- Other confidential information about the individual involved

When appropriate, staff may advise a parent/guardian to seek medical advice regarding their own child's health or potential exposure. Staff shall not provide health information about the other individual.

Documentation

All human biting incidents shall be documented.

The Accident/Injury Report shall include:

- Date and time of incident
- Location of incident
- Name of the injured child or individual
- Description of the incident
- Area of the body affected
- Whether the skin was broken
- Whether blood was present
- First aid provided
- Parent/guardian notification
- Medical follow-up, if applicable
- Any additional actions or follow-up actions taken

Records shall be maintained according to CICC record retention requirements.

Follow-Up And Recurring Biting

When biting incidents are recurring, CICC will review documented incidents to identify patterns and contributing factors.

The review may consider:

- Time of day
- Activities or transitions
- Environmental factors
- Communication difficulties
- Sensory needs
- Interactions with peers
- Signs of frustration, fatigue, hunger, or overstimulation
- Supervision considerations

Where appropriate, staff will work with the child's parents/guardians to develop or modify strategies to reduce future incidents.

Strategies may include:

- Increased supervision
- Environmental changes
- Communication supports
- Changes to routines or transitions
- Sensory supports
- Teaching alternative ways for the child to communicate needs

References

- Toronto Public Health. *Infection Prevention and Control Measures for Child Care Centres*.
- Toronto Public Health. *Blood and Body Fluid Exposures: Response Procedures*.
- Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014
- Ontario Regulation 137/15.