



made2move:therapy4kids

Functional Activities for Children at the mouthing stage

What is considered typical?

During typical development around the 4th -5th month, the stage of mouthing introduces babies/ toddlers to the sensory world and sensations that increase awareness of the mouth and prepare the mouth for complex functions of feeding and communication. These sensations increase comfort (teething), emotional stability (sucking) and organization (biting). As the child ages, he uses other senses to explore his world.

Benefit: Oral motor development is linked to eye hand development

Why do children put things in the mouth?

- Children use their mouth to explore the world
- Children can be craving tastes (salty, sweet, etc) and not able to regulate
- Children may need more oral input and getting it with anything that is available (scissors, pen, glue, etc)

What strategies are available for children who do not leave the mouthing stage?

- Sensory awareness basket with appropriate mouthing objects:
 - Toothbrush or NUK
 - Cup or spoon
 - Twirly keychain
 - Refrigerator tubing (can be soaked in boiling vanilla water for flavor)
 - Tactile glove with objects
- Increased input to the lower jaw:
 - Vibrating toothbrush during teeth brushing
 - Vibrator along the lower jaw line
 - Adult tapping child's lower jaw line
- Reduce mouthing of hand as interference with function
 - Glove on hand that is constantly being mouthed
 - Elbow conformer -see OT
 - Texture mat on work surface so child can explore
 - Sock bottle with sensory objects (take 2 liter bottle and cut the end off and place in a tube sock. Fill with rice and objects. Put the tube over the child's arm and allow the hands to be engaged)
- Explore resistance food – things that are chewy and give input to the mouth
 - Bagels
 - Jerky
 - Licorice
 - Gummy worms
 - Bubble gum



Why do children bite:

- Biting is a way of gaining control and getting attention
- Biting can relieve stress when a child feels threatened
- Biting can be as a result of frustration due to a lack of communication
- Biting can be cause and effect

What strategies are available for children who bite?

- Use a biting log to determine why and what is really happening
- Experts recommend focusing attention on the victim, shielding the victim from the biter, initiating first aid measures as necessary, and consoling the victim (Claffey, Kucharski, & Gratz, 1994; Greenman, 1995).
- Develop communication skills (picture symbols, signing, gesturing)
- Create positive learning environment by maintaining consistent routine introducing new and novel

Resources:

- www.superduperinc.com - oral motor section
- <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/biting.htm>
- <http://www.ccids.umaine.edu/ec/growingideas/bitingtip.htm>
- <http://parents.berkeley.edu/advice/worries/biting.html>

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	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
During what did the biting happen?			
What triggered biting?			
Why do you think it happened?			
Who was involved?			
What time of day?			
What happened after biting? (handled)			
IS the child biting self or objects?			

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