

Stay Calm, Stay Safe

When behavior becomes hitting, biting, or self-injury

When your child hits, bites, throws, or hurts themselves, it's frightening, and it's easy to feel alone or blamed. **Here's the truth:** unsafe behavior is communication from a child who doesn't yet have a better way to show what they need. Safety comes first. Understanding comes next.

In the moment: keep everyone safe

- ☐ **Stay calm and quiet.** Use as few words as possible. Your steady body tells theirs it's safe.
- ☐ **Make space.** Move siblings and others away, and move breakable or dangerous objects out of reach.
- ☐ **Protect, don't punish.** Block with a pillow or cushion and step back out of reach. Avoid grabbing or holding down unless someone is in immediate danger.
- ☐ **Lower the demand.** Pause whatever was asked. This isn't giving in; a child in crisis can't learn or comply.
- ☐ **Call 911** if anyone is seriously hurt or you can't keep people safe.

Look for the "why"

- **Pain or illness.** Sudden or new self-injury can be a sign of pain (ears, teeth, stomach). Check with your pediatrician.
- **Escape.** A task, place, or sensation that feels like too much.
- **Getting something.** A toy, food, activity, or your attention.
- **Sensory.** The behavior itself may feel regulating.

Afterward

- ☐ Reconnect calmly. No lectures; your child needs to know they're still safe with you.
- ☐ Care for any injuries, including your own.
- ☐ Write down what happened right before, during, and after. Patterns show up fast.

Quick behavior log

Date / time:	What happened right before:	What it looked like / what happened after:
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You don't have to manage this alone

If unsafe behavior is frequent, getting worse, or someone is getting hurt, it's time for support. A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) finds the reason behind the behavior, and a plan built from it teaches safer ways to meet the same need.

[Book a free consultation](#)

ACCEPT. UNDERSTAND. LOVE.