FERRET BITTING

First thing is to be aware when you are around the ferret for actions that lead up to biting. For example, I had a ferret that would always lick twice before biting (as do a lot of ferrets). I had another that would come up and sniff first before biting. If you can recognize some of the actions, you can take preemptive measures to keep the biting from occurring.

Be sure the ferret is not hungry.  A ferret should always have food down. Ferrets can be very picky about the food they eat, so make sure the ferret is eating nearly a bowlful of food a day. If it isn't, it's probably not eating enough because it doesn't like the food.

Many times a ferret will bite because it wants attention, and this is one of the only ways it can show you that.  Give the ferret more attention and see if that helps.

If you see that the ferret is acting like it is going to bite, move the ferret away from you or move slowly away from the ferret. If you move away quickly, the ferret will think it is a game and wants to bite even more.

Until the ferret no longer bites, do not roughhouse, play chase, or do anything else that will make the ferret more likely to bite. **The ferret must first learn to play nicely.**When the ferret does bite, tell the ferret no (but not yelling) and put the ferret away from you or the animal it is biting. Don't yell at, shake, or hit the ferret, because this can cause more biting and even aggressiveness. If the ferret tries to bite again within a short time (like a few minutes), tell it no and put it in a different area.

If it happens again, tell it no and put it in the cage or pet carrier, but only for a minute or two. They usually get the picture very quickly when they get confined. If the biting persists, confine to the cage again. Continue to confine to the cage for one or two minutes at a time. If you confine them for more than a minute or two, they don’t remember why they are there, and you lose the reason for putting them there. This is very important.

At the same time as all of this, use positive reinforcement with the ferret.  Find a treat it likes - Bandits treats, salmon oil, freeze-dried meat products, Furrotone, etc.  When the ferret is around you and acts like it's going to bite but doesn't, give it a treat.  Do this even if you have to tell it no and that's what makes it stop.  Animals quickly learn to do what is necessary to get what they like.  This means you need to have some of the treats in many places throughout the play areas, so you can immediately give a treat.  Once a few seconds have passed, the ferret won't know what the treat is for.