

Kids and Dogs

Simple Rules for Safe Fun
by Joan Orr & Teresa Lewin

A dog can be a kid's best friend but like human friends dogs are not always in the mood for play or interaction. Johnny may love to snuggle before bed with you while you read a bed time story, but try running out on to the ice to snuggle in the middle of hockey practice and you may not get such a good reaction! Kids need to learn that it is the same

leaves or looks at you or the child with a half moon of white showing in his eye is telling you that he is anxious, unhappy and has had enough. These signs will precede the more well-recognized signs of a dog that is warning by growling, snarling, barking or snapping. Teach kids to recognize the signs of a happy dog (panting and wagging his tail) compared to a

bites to the face. Instead, teach kids to scratch the dog on the chest or the side of the neck.
2. *Be a Tree if a Strange Dog Approaches* Teach kids to stand still, like a tree. Trees are boring and the dog will eventually go away. This works for strange dogs and anytime the family dog gets too frisky or becomes aggressive.
3. *Never Tease a Dog* and never

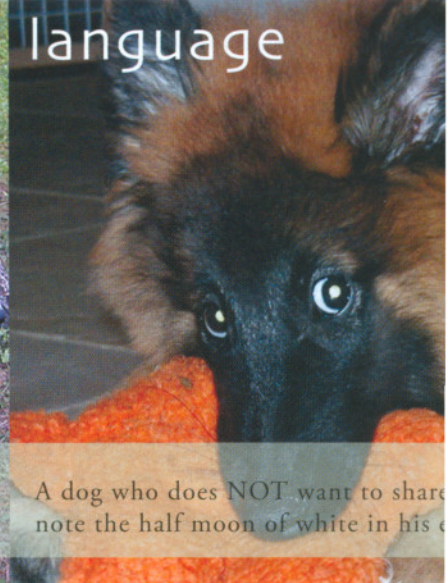
Dogs communicate with body language



A relaxed dog - happy & panting.



A serious dog - mouth closed, tail stiff & high



A dog who does NOT want to share note the half moon of white in his eye

way with dogs. There is a time and a place for play, petting or just sitting quietly and at other times the dog just wants to be left alone. Most dogs are extremely tolerant, but if a dog is pushed too far by unwanted attention from kids or feels that the child is threatening him in some way he may feel he has no choice but to growl or snap.

Dogs communicate with body language and kids and parents can learn to read these subtle signs so that they know when the dog is asking to be left alone. *A dog that licks his chops, yawns, suddenly begins to scratch or bite at himself, turns his head away, gets up and*

dog that is anxious or busy with something else (mouth closed and the other signs listed previously). Teach them to interact only with happy dogs and to leave a dog alone who is busy with something else or is showing signs of anxiety. Here are some other tips to help parents and dog owners keep kids safe around dogs:

The 3 Most Important Things to Teach Your Kids

1. *Dogs Don't Like Hugs and Kisses*
Teach your kids not to hug or kiss a dog on the face. Hugging the family dog or face-to-face contact are common causes of

disturb a dog that's sleeping, eating or protecting something.

The 2 Most Important Things Parents Can Do

1. *Supervise* Don't assume your dog is good with kids. If a toddler must interact with your dog, you should have your hands on the dog too. Even if your dog is great with kids and has never bitten, why take a chance?
2. *Train the dog* Take your dog to obedience classes where positive-reinforcement is used. Never pin, shake, choke, hold the dog down or roll the dog over to teach it a lesson. Dogs treated this way are

likely to turn their aggression on weaker family members. Involve older children in training the family dog while supervising. Don't allow children to punish the dog. Condition the dog to enjoy the presence and actions of children using positive experiences.

experiences. Train using positive methods such as clicker training.
3. Supervise Your Dog
 Supervise your dog at all times around children. Do not allow children to hug and kiss the dog. If visiting children are bothering your dog, put the dog

away or send the children home. Dogs and kids can be great together. It is the parent's and dog owner's responsibility to ensure that the needs of both are met and that happy interactions are the norm between kids and dogs. 🐾

The 3 Most Important Things Dog Owners Can Do

1. *Spay or Neuter Your Dog*
 Neutered pets are calmer, healthier and less likely to be aggressive. Neutering prevents unwanted dogs that may end up in shelters or in less than ideal conditions where they may grow up to be poorly socialized or aggressive.
2. *Condition Your Dog for the World*
 Give your puppy lots of new positive

HOW TO "BE A TREE"



Stop



Fold in your branches



Watch your roots grow and count in your head

Joan Orr and Teresa Lewin are the CO-founders of Doggone Safe, a non-profit organization dedicated to dog bite prevention through education and dog bite victim support (www.doggonesafe.com). They are also the creators of the Doggone Crazy! board game, Clicker Puppy dog training DVD and the Be a Tree teacher kit (www.doggonecrazy.com).



Bide Awhile Shelter's staff and four footed residents are eagerly anticipating the move to their new building which is fast approaching completion. The new residence, pictured here in the Woodside Industrial Park area of Dartmouth promises to be lightfilled, spacious and modern, complete with infloor heating. Darrold Gould, Bide Awhile's Executive Director recently spoke of his appreciation of and respect for the unstinting efforts of Doug Doucet and his team from RCS Construction, without whom the project might still be just a dream. Hats off to all the workers and volunteers and fundraisers and donors who work tirelessly to make this possible! Stay tuned for the grand opening coming up in June.

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