

Dogs & Children

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Rules To Teach Your Children That Can Prevent Dog Bites

Most dogs do not bite. But ALL dogs – a stranger’s dog, your neighbor’s dog, even your own dog – have the potential to bite. That’s especially true if a dog feels threatened or scared or becomes overly excited. The following rules for children can minimize the risk that they will get bitten. Most of these rules apply to adults, as well.

General Rules

- ◆ Never play with a dog unless an adult is present
 - ◆ Never go near an unfamiliar dog
- ◆ Never pet a dog without first asking the owner’s permission
 - ◆ Never pet a dog without first letting it smell you
- ◆ Don’t pat a dog on top of its head. Pat it under the chin or on the back
 - ◆ Never move if a dog sniffs you. Stand still.
 - ◆ Never scream around a dog
- ◆ Never run past a dog. Don’t run up to a dog – even one that you know
 - ◆ Never sneak up on a dog. Approach from the side or front.

Don’t Play Rough

- ◆ Never tease a dog, hit it, or pull its ears, tail or feet
- ◆ Never play rough games, such as wrestling, with a dog

When To “Stay Away”

- ◆ Never disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping
- ◆ Never approach a dog that is taking care of puppies. Never touch the puppies.
 - ◆ Never go near a dog that is growling or showing teeth

How To Handle Threatening Situations

- ◆ Don’t turn and run if a dog threatens you; try to stay calm and do not scream
- ◆ If a dog approaches, stand very still – “like a tree”. Do not make eye contact.
- ◆ If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl up in a ball and cover your head and face

If You Are Thinking Of Getting A Dog...

- ◆ Consult with a professional to learn about suitable breeds for your household
- ◆ A dog with a known history of aggression is inappropriate in a household with children
- ◆ Be sensitive to cues that a child is fearful or apprehensive about a dog. If you observe such cues, reconsider or delay getting a dog.
- ◆ Spend time with a dog before buying or adopting it. Try to find out where the dog originally came from and its background.
 - ◆ Never leave infants or young children alone with any dog

- ◆ Spay or neuter your dog. This often reduces aggressive tendencies.
- ◆ Properly socialize and train the dog. Teach submissive behaviors, such as rolling over to expose abdomen, and relinquishing food without growling
- ◆ Be consistent with training and daily life – just as you should be with children.