



Staying Safe with Kids & Dogs

Kids today are always on the move, whether they are on bicycles, skateboards, or walking to the bus stop. They explore new places and come in to contact with different sights, sounds, people and even animals. It is important to teach your children how to behave around dogs as to avoid a possible bite.

Dogs do not like to be teased. Tell your children to stay away from dogs that are chained or in fenced yards. Loud noises, fast movements, and sticking fingers through fences or car door windows may scare a dog and cause them to bite.

Teach your children how to pet a dog the correct way. Dogs can feel pain just like people. Instruct your children to pet dogs gently and to never pull on a dog's ears, tail, or fur. Never discipline a dog by hitting or kicking them.

People should avoid petting a dog during several situations. Some dogs can be possessive, so tell children to not pet a dog when they are eating, sleeping, or are injured or sick. Also, never grab bones, balls or other pet toys away from them. Stay away from mother's with their young as they may be very protective. It's never a good idea to come in between two dogs that are fighting. Tell your children to get an adult to help if they ever encounter a dog fight.

Know what an angry dog looks like. Barking, growling, snarling with teeth showing, ears laid flat, legs stiff, tail up and hair standing up on the back are all warning signs. A dog wagging his tail does not always mean they are happy. If a dog is showing any of these signs, instruct your children to slowly walk away sideways. Shout "NO" at the dog and act like the boss. Dogs can sense fear and are more apt to bite if he knows you are afraid of him, so try to stay as calm as possible. Tell them to NEVER stare a dog in the eyes, or turn around and run away. This may cause a dog to feel challenged and to chase after the person running away, which could then lead to a bite. Offer the dog a backpack or school book if he lunges at you. Curl up in a ball on the ground and protect your face if a dog attacks or knocks you over.

If bitten, tell your children to get an adult right away. Ask your child to remember what the dog looked like, if it had a collar, and in what direction it went. Wash the wound with soap and water and see a doctor. Report the bite to the local health department.

All of these do's and don'ts of dog safety will help to protect your children from becoming the victim of a dog bite. The rewards of teaching consideration and respect for animals are children who are both humane and safe!

This document is being provided for informational purposes only and is not intended as veterinary or behavioral counsel.