



11.18.2018

# Kid-Proof Your Dog

Raising children and dogs in the same household can be very rewarding, but it can also be challenging. Benefits of raising children around dogs include enhancing a child's self-esteem, teaching them responsibility, and helping them learn empathy. Just like adults and dogs, children and dogs are not automatically going to have a strong relationship with one another. Parents and adults must teach the dog and the child acceptable behaviors and actions to make each interaction pleasant and safe.

Selecting a great family dog can be a difficult decision. A few things to consider before getting a dog include: time and energy required for care and training, safety of pet and youth e.g. chances of rough play and puppy biting. Once you pick out a puppy or dog, be sure to properly prepare the home and family before bringing the dog home. Have all the essentials and plan out important details like where the dog will sleep, eat, eliminate, and more.

Next, start off with some boundaries and realistic expectations. Small children should never be left alone with a dog or puppy without adult supervision. Teach your child how to pet the dog and appropriate ways to show the dog affection. Children should be taught not to grab, hug, or kiss dogs. Your dog may view this as a threat and may react negatively, putting the child at risk. Teach your child to pet the dog under the chin or on the back rather than hugging or reaching over the head.

Taking a family-based dog training class can be very beneficial for the whole family. The entire family should be involved in the responsibility of proper communication, training, care, and cleaning up after an animal. Teach your dog basic obedience in order to build better communication between human and canine. Try taking your dog to different places so they get used to different surroundings and people.

Help kid-proof your dog by teaching your dog to appropriately handle and respond to:

- Rough and clumsy petting
- Restraining hugs or being held down
- Pestering or poking
- Being climbed and pulled on
- Releasing toys, bones, and other resources when human hands touch items

It is important to keep in mind that when teaching your dog to handle and respond to things such as clumsy petting, being climbed on, or being poked, you should pay special attention to your dog's reactions and stress levels. Your dog should never become stressed during any training sessions. Keep in mind that even though your dog may learn how to handle and respond to these actions, it is equally, if not more important, to "dog-proof your kid" so children can learn how to be respectful to a dog or puppy.



# Dog-Proof Your Kid

Teaching your children to be safe around dogs is crucial. Did you know that 77 percent of dog bites involving children are from dogs the child knows? That means nearly 77 percent of dog bites to children can be prevented! Teach your child or adolescent how to recognize dog body language, respect a dog's personal space, provide appropriate pet care, and interact with a dog safely. More children suffer from dog bites and scratches than all other childhood diseases combined. Although it is important to teach our canines how to act around children, it is also imperative to teach our youth to be safe around dogs. Dog bite prevention and safety should be discussed in every home! Parents should always supervise interactions between the dog and child.

Teach your child the following to help them be safe around dogs:

- Treat dogs and other animals with respect and give them personal space
- Always ask the dog's owner before petting a dog
- Place your fist slowly toward the dog's nose and allow the dog to sniff it
- Reach under the chin towards the chest to pet
- If the dog appears calm and friendly, pet the back, from head to tail
- Always walk and never run around dogs
- Always use slow motions and do not move too quickly around dogs
- Always speak quietly and do not scream, yell, or squeal around dogs
- Do not chase dogs or encourage them to chase you
- Do not stare at a dog. Staring at humans is rude and to dogs it is a threat and rude
- Do not hug, hold down, climb on, or restrain a dog. Show your dog you care with gentle pets on the chin or chest or down their back
- Give a dog space if he is sleeping, resting, or eating

Use the "L.A.S.T." approach to teach a child how to greet a dog on leash in public:

L. ook – Look at the dog's body language to see if it's friendly

A. sk – Ask the dog's handler if you can pet the dog

S. how – Show the dog your closed fist to sniff

T. ouch – Touch the dog's chin or chest first, before reaching over or around to pet it's back

Teach your child these safety skills for a jumping dog:

When a dog jumps up on you, be still like a tree. Keep your eyes a little to the sky or to the side, not looking at the dog. Stand still until the dog moves away or someone removes the dog from jumping. Never push, shove, kick, or use your words or hands to hurt another being. If a dog jumps and knocks you down, roll into a ball and protect your face by cupping your arms and hands over your ears and face. This may look similar to the position you use for a tornado drill.

It is also a great idea to take a family-based dog training class! The entire family should be involved in the responsibility of proper communication, training, care, and cleaning up after an animal. The relationship between a child and a dog is very special. It is important to help the child and the dog understand how to properly interact with one another.

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