

woofmeow

training

April 26th is National Kids and Pets Day.



Here are some tips to help you out with your dog.

Child/Dog Safety Guide

The statistics for dog bites on children are shocking and highly preventable.

Dogs make wonderful companions, and we have them in our lives because we love them! Many dogs are friendly and happily accept petting and affection. However, bites do happen.

What do parents need to know about dog safety?

Dogs don't bite without giving some kind of warning, but while some dogs might growl, tense up, or bark aggressively, others give warning signs that are so subtle that they are easy to miss.

Dogs bite because they're afraid, angry, or frustrated. They could also be in pain or protecting something that is valuable to them. It's important for us to learn about dog body language, so we can recognize the signs that a dog is uncomfortable and more likely to act out. We also need to recognize situations and environments where the chance of a bite is more likely.

- **Important:** Dogs and small or young children should never be left alone together, unsupervised. Canine body language is tricky to read and young children simply cannot do it on their own. In order to keep everyone safe, an adult should always be in the room and actively paying attention to both.

What do kids need to know about dog safety?

Kids need to learn:

- Never reach for or touch a dog that is unknown to you.
- Never approach a dog that is or has been tied up or left at the end of a chain in a yard, outside a store or behind a fence.
- If you see a dog that is loose in your neighborhood, tell an adult immediately. Don't move toward it, call at it, chase it, grab it, pet it, or touch it.

What if you get scared by a dog?

- If a dog scares you, do your very best to stay still and look away. Avoid screaming and running. Put your hands together, stand still, look away, turn your body sideways, and completely ignore him until he loses interest in you and goes away instead. The more boring you are, the less the dog will want to interact with you. If he comes close to you for a sniff, when he has finished sniffing and walks away from you, wait for him to create some distance and then you can walk slowly away and tell an adult.
- If the dog comes toward you and tries to bite you, put a blanket or coat between you and the dog and back away to a safe place. As scary as it might be, try to remember to move slowly away, without making eye contact and be as quiet as you can.
- If a dog has bitten you and you are on the floor, roll up into a ball on your knees, with your arms clasped around the back of your neck and stay as still as you can until help arrives. You want to make yourself into the tightest ball you can so that your head is protected and your arms and legs are all tucked up nice and tight.

Can you pet a friendly dog?

- Even if you know the dog, always ask if you can meet the dog or pet the dog. Get permission before approaching, and follow the handler's instructions because they know their dog best.
- Even when you have permission, try not to invade the dog's space. Allow the dog to come up and sniff your hand. Keep your arms down and hanging loosely by your legs.
- If the dog doesn't want to come and sniff you, respect that decision and do not reach out for him. If he does approach and sniffs you all over, still don't reach out for him.
- If a dog wants to be petted, he'll show you by looking up at you, leaning against you, nuzzling your hand with his nose, etc. Only pet him when he asks you to.
- The dog's back or chest is the best place to pet. (Approaching a dog from behind or petting him directly on the top of his head can be scary and can feel threatening and uncomfortable for him.) Petting with only one hand is always a good rule to follow! (Two hands can quickly turn into grabbing, hugging or holding.)
- Always give a dog the space and the freedom to move away! As hard as it is, do not squeeze, hold, or chase him as he's walking away. When a dog moves away, he's telling you that he's had enough petting.

How can you help a dog feel comfortable?

- Dog greetings are different from people greetings. Never stare at a dog, kiss its face, or put your face close to a dog's face. Look at the dog briefly and then turn your head away. Look back at him and look away again. This tells the dog that you're not a threat.

- Just like us, dogs don't like being teased. This can frustrate or upset them, and they might ask you to stop by "air snapping" (which means snapping their mouth toward you but not actually putting their teeth on your skin). If it happens often enough, they might not show us that they're frustrated at all, and they might escalate to biting.
- Remember that a dog is an animal and not a cuddly toy. Most dogs don't like being hugged or kissed. Even if you think that your dog does, he probably doesn't. He might get really still and tolerate the hug because he loves you but it's not comfortable for him. Hugging in dog language can be a signal to fight another dog so when we hug our dogs, they could think that we want to fight, which we definitely do not.

How do you play safely with a dog?

- Be gentle with any dog and don't engage in rough play. Wrestling or "play fighting" with a dog might overexcite the dog and send the wrong message. He might put his teeth on you or bite you because that's how dogs play with each other.
- Avoid taking a toy away from a dog if he is playing with it. If the dog has something in his mouth that you feel is unsafe for him to have, go quickly to find an adult who can help trade the item in his mouth for a high value treat.

When should you leave a dog alone?

- Leave dogs alone when they are eating! Imagine that you are out with your family at a restaurant, and you are loving what you're eating. All of a sudden, the waiter comes over and reaches for your plate or even worse, he takes it away. Try to imagine how you would feel. You would probably be pretty angry, and you would try and prevent the waiter from getting your food. Dogs are the same in that they don't like people coming up to them and touching them or their food bowls while they're eating. If your dog is eating or chewing on a bone, do not approach and just let them eat or chew all alone.
- Leave dogs alone when they are sleeping! Imagine you are sound asleep, and somebody comes and starts petting your head, giving you belly rubs or even worse, starts pulling on your hair and foot! That would just be weird, and maybe even a little bit scary! Dogs can startle easily if they are awoken suddenly, and they sometimes react without thinking. They may wake up with a growl and a snap, so if you see your pup sleeping, let him continue to do that undisturbed.

More safety tips for kids

- If you want to sit on a sofa or chair that a dog is sitting on, do not pull him off. Some dogs can be quite protective of where they sleep so they might not want to share the sofa or chair and having you climb up might just be too much for them. If your dog knows the cue "off," you can ask the dog to jump "off" the couch by pointing to the floor and asking them to "off." You could toss a toy for them to go and get. If that doesn't work, go and get an adult to move the dog for you.
- If you are at someone's house with a rambunctious dog don't feel embarrassed about asking an adult to put the dog away in a different room if he makes you feel uncomfortable. If you're afraid of the dog but don't feel comfortable telling anyone, tell your parents so they can speak with the other adults.

Safety notes for parents

Teaching our children the safe way to approach, handle, and play with dogs will go a long way to keeping everyone safe.

Our dogs need us to “speak” for them, so watch your dog for subtle signs of stress. These include lip licking, stillness, closed mouth, vocalizations, stiff body or tail, whites of their eyes (called “whale eye”) and other signs. If a dog does display any of these signs, remove the dog away from the child.

If you’re unsure of how to safely manage the environment for both your dog and children, to ensure that everyone can coexist happily and safely together, enlist the help of our trainers

To book with our Derry Location

Scan to Book



or call (603)965-3218

To book with our Dover Location

Scan to book



or call (603)842-4466