



CHILDREN AND DOGS

This information is a guide only and is to be used only after consulting with your trainer first. Your trainer will be able to provide you with a few extra tips on how to solve the problems, which may be more in-tune with the temperament of your dog. In most cases the best way to deal with a behavioural problem is to find and treat the cause, rather than merely treating the symptom, which is why we recommend you consider doing the "Leadership Program" which is a uniquely tailored behaviour modification program for numerous or more serious behavioural problems.

Children and dogs make wonderful friends.....that is of course if the dog is socialised to children and the children know how to responsibly act when around dogs!

These days, nearly ever second household owns a pet of some sort, with dogs being the most popular choice. Nearly every fourth household has a child under the age of 12 years with a dog for a pet. Also interesting to note that most of the dog attacks occur to children under 12!

Let's look at how we can make dogs and children safer around each other.

Creating a child- safe dog

There is no secret, the safest dogs are those that are socialised from a young age and *obedience trained!* These dogs are calmer around most everyday situations and are easily controlled when need be. But make no mistake.....**ALL DOGS, REGARDLESS OF BREED, AGE AND TEMPERAMENT, ARE CAPABLE OF BITING!!** Especially if being cornered, poked, teased and coaxed (generally speaking – tormented!) Some dogs are more tolerant than others, but generally, any dog will defend itself if it feels it is being threatened, regardless of who by!

Creating "dog-safe" children

It is also no secret that most of the "tormenters" are young children under 12yo, who have not been told otherwise; and who run the risk of being growled at, snapped at and in some cases severely bitten.

Children must be taught and educated on how to be dog-safe children. This means no tormenting the dog, *especially* when it's sleeping, eating or resting. They must also be shown the acceptable type of play around dogs, ie, a screaming child who is waving his arms about whilst running around the house is going to attract the dog's attention. The dog thinks this is play and will start to chase and nip the child and if the dog becomes overexcited, he may start to jump up and nip/bite.

The safest way for a child and dog to "play" together is by way of a fetch game. Teach the child (if old enough) how to play fetch games with the dog. This keeps your child standing (not running!) and is also giving the dog a safe and fun game to play (make sure you teach the dog to sit for the ball throw!). For younger children, have them sitting between your legs whilst you throw the ball for the dog. The main aim is to keep the child in one spot and not running around. If your dog doesn't enjoy a fetch game, then perhaps the child could be amusing him/herself with games that don't involve running around.

If there are many children and you cannot supervise the play at that time, then it is best to keep the dog somewhere where he cannot interfere with the children playing. This way you eliminate the possibility of accidents occurring.

Do's for your children around dogs

- Stay calm and don't scream
- Pat the dog under the chin
- Play safe games such as fetch
- Feed the dog from his bowl
- Ask permission before you approach a dog
- Leave the dog to sleep, rest and eat quietly
- Keep away from dog's sleeping areas

Don'ts for your children around dogs

- Run around flapping arms and screaming
- Pat the dog on top of his head, pull ears/tail
- Play chase, tug or wrestling games
- Feed the dog from the table
- Rush up to a dog to pat it
- Torment the dog at any time
- Sit in the dog's sleeping area

By following the above, you are ensuring the safest possible interaction between your child and dogs and also developing the beautiful bond that is a child and his/her dog.

Always supervise whenever your pets and your children are together. Never leave them alone!