

## SAFE KIDS/SAFE DOGS GENERAL NOTES

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC): dog bites are one of the primary reasons children require emergency medical attention. It is also a reason why many adults are injured as well. The media would like parents to believe it is the rampaging stray that causes most bites. This is false. According to the CDC, most bites (approx. 75-85%) occur from the family dog or the dog of someone the child knows.

There is no “perfect” dog for a family. Research into the type, source, proper maintenance, the time and effort the owner puts into the dog are the real keys to having a safer dog. Even if you do not have children, your dog must learn how to behave around them. Children from a young age must learn to behave around dogs. Proper supervision and education are important. Even if you do not own a dog, your child must learn how to be safer around them. This safety information is universal for all ages – not just children!

**The following are things every child, parent and dog owner should be aware of.**

### FOR THE PARENT/CHILD

- Never run up to a dog, even one you know.
- Never scream or run around a dog, even your own.
- Approach dogs from the side or front - do not sneak up on a dog from behind or while the dog is sleeping or eating.
- Never approach a dog without adult supervision - even if the dog belongs to a friend or neighbor.
- Always let the dog sniff you first and do not stare him in the eye, some dogs may be threatened by this.
- Pat under the chin or on the back, some dogs may get nervous if you touch the top of the head.
- If approached by a dog, stand still. If you are on a bike, stop, put the bike down and stand still. Never run or ride away!
- Never approach a dog that is acting afraid or one that is growling or showing teeth - even if the owner is there.
- Never hang over fences or put your hands through fence openings to touch a dog, even one you know.
- Leave a mother and pups be - she may become protective!
- Avoid rough games such as tug-of-war, jumping up for toys/food, wrestling and chase the kid.
- Never tease or hit a dog or pull ears, tail or feet.
- Always inform an adult if you see a loose dog.
- Never run away from a dog - it can encourage a chase.
- If a dog threatens you, avoid eye contact, hold a rolled up jacket or book bag in front of you and back away slowly. Do not scream or run. The dog could chase you.
- If a dog attacks, roll up like a ball and put your hands behind your neck. Remain still, call for help if there are people around to hear. If not, stay quiet, still, and the dog should bore and leave.

### FOR THE DOG OWNER

- Begin training and socializing your dog or puppy starting the first day it comes into your house. Enroll in a positively based Puppy or Adult dog obedience class.
- Get your dog accustomed to having every part of the body handled.
- Never allow a child to scream, yell or run around a dog. Even if the dog and child belong to you.
- Keep your dog securely fenced and not tied in your yard. Tying can encourage unwanted behaviors.
- Keep your dog leashed when in public. If you want to let him run, go to an area designated for off-leash dogs such as a dog park.
- Never leave your dog unattended in the yard - the temptation for children to “visit” can be too great.
- Make sure your dog knows the rules of greeting: always sitting calmly. If the dog cannot sit, the dog cannot be greeted.
- Never let a child walk a dog unsupervised. Even a medium-sized dog can pull down a child or the child may become frightened and drop the leash.
- Always supervise children (even teenagers) with dogs. And do not hesitate to reinforce the behaviors from both that you want.
- Never force your dog to “say hi” if he is acting wary of a person.
- Monitor your dog’s behavior and address any concerns immediately with a trainer or behaviorist.
- Use every opportunity to teach about dog safety.
- Spay/Neuter your dog.

This was developed by the Safe Kids/Safe Dogs Project

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