



## INTRODUCING DOGS TO CHILDREN

If you and your family are lucky enough to share your lives with a dog, practice safe habits from the get-go; lead by example and teach your children. Observe these basic dog safety guidelines:

- If you have an infant or very young child, never allow a dog into the child's room without close supervision
- Help your child understand the dog does not enjoy a hug or a tight squeeze and show her instead how to pat the dog gently
- Teach your child never to pull the dog's ears or tail or attempt to climb on or ride the dog
- Never allow your child to drag the dog around or play "dress up" with him
- Encourage your child or children to lower their voices when playing around dogs
- Keep dogs and kids separated at snack time or during meals
- Help your child learn to respect the dog's quiet time: when the dog retreats to his crate, the child should leave him alone. Likewise, help her understand it's appropriate to play with the dog only when the dog wants to play

## CHILD'S PLAY: SAFE GAMES FOR YOUR KIDS AND THE DOG

### **Encourage healthy, fun interaction between the family pet and your child or children**

- Fetch is a wonderful, classic dog game, as long as it does not become a game of tug-of-war with the toy or ball. Instruct your child to walk away if the dog will not surrender the object and show her how to ask the dog to drop it on cue
- Dog tricks are an excellent way to stimulate the dog and help him bond with the child. Set up an agility course with low jumps, tunnels, and hoops to crawl through. This is also safe, rainy day fun for dogs and kids indoors
- In lieu of chasing, teach the dog to run on a leash, but never allow a child to walk or run with the dog unsupervised
- Play hide and seek with toys and treats

# DOG SAFETY GUIDELINES

## **These activities are unsafe for a child to undertake with a dog**

- Allowing a new puppy to chew on fingers and clothing
- Chasing or being chased by the dog
- Encouraging the dog to jump up for food, a toy, or a stick
- Tug-of War with the dog; this is a safe activity only for an adult or much older child, and when the dog understands he must always surrender the tug object to the person
- Wrestling with the dog
- Teasing the dog
- Discourage your child from putting her face close to the dog's, and from holding the dog's gaze with direct frontal eye contact. Teach her instead to look at the dog, and then away, look at the dog, and then away: this communicates to the dog that the child is not a threat.
- Teach your child never to approach the dog from behind
- If the dog is on the sofa or chair and refuses to budge, help your child understand never to push or tug the dog out of the way, but to seek your help instead
- Teach your child never to attempt to take a toy or treat from the dog, or to bother him while he is eating, drinking, or sleeping. Ask the child to come and get you if the dog is chewing something, he should not
- When your child is visiting a friend with a dog who makes her feel uncomfortable, help her understand it is okay to ask the adult in charge to put the dog in another room

## **Let Sleeping Dogs Lie: Knowing When to Leave Them Be**

- Avoid petting or otherwise disturbing an unknown dog in his fenced enclosure
- Avoid reaching your hand inside the open window of a car to pet an unknown dog
- Avoid bothering a sleeping dog
- Avoid bothering a dog who is eating or drinking
- Avoid trying to take away a toy or a treat from a dog: ask an adult for help
- Avoid a mother dog and her pups
- Avoid a loose dog you don't know; inform your local animal control officer

For many of us, a special dog occupies an important place in the family "pack"~ our beloved canines really do want to be our best friends. But even if you don't share your home with a dog, teaching your child safety around them is important. And if you've been thinking about bringing home a new puppy or dog, get a leg up on safety ahead of time: carefully research a wide range of breeds, paying especial attention to breed-specific temperament. Also consider the dog's source: a retriever who has been bred for prowess in the field may be unsuitable as a family dog. Dog safety starts with creatures who are destined to get along. Observe safety precautions, and enjoy his company: there is no substitute for the enrichment that comes from the unconditional love of a dog

Source: <https://www.orvis.com/dog-safety-guidelines>