



Dogs and Children

Dogs and children can have beautiful relationships that seem to come straight out of a fairy tale. But, safety should always be a paramount during their interactions together. Children should be taught to be aware of their behavior around dogs, and adults should manage and prevent mishandling of dogs and behavior that can make dogs fearful or defensive.

Children's behavior is so different from adult's, that dogs can often be confused or worried by it. Kids can be loud, busy, move quickly, and sometimes not respond to dogs' behavior that way an adult would. Communication between dogs and children can be very difficult, so it is our job to translate and keep everyone happy.

It is never safe to assume that children and dogs can be left alone together. Their interactions should always be monitored to prevent accidents, and curtail any issues that may just be starting. If you do not start to see issues arise, you may need to consult a professional trainer to assist in making your dog more comfortable and help facilitate safe interactions between your dog and child. Never punish your dog for growling at a child, as this is a valuable warning signal they are giving to communicate discomfort. Remember, a dog who is growling is saying, "Please stop, I don't want to bite".

Here are a few tips to help keep interactions between dogs and kids fun and safe.

- Give your dog a "time out" area where they can safely take a break, or rest that is off limits to children.
- Dogs should never be bothered while eating, and interactions with toys should be monitored, even just to prevent your child from being knocked over by an excited puppy.
- Teach children that interactions with dogs (and all animals) are privileges and their behavior must be appropriate and kind in order to have them. Pestering, poking and prodding are not allowed.
- Learn to recognize stress signs in dogs, and if your dog seems unhappy, remove them from the area and give them time to relax. Everyone needs a break sometimes.

Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away

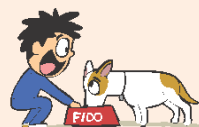


Pacing

How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

Avoid taking people's food



Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating

Avoid stealing other people's toys



Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys

Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face



Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face

Avoid bothering when asleep



Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.

Avoid pestering



Avoid grabbing tail/ears

Avoid climbing on or trampling



Avoid climbing on or trampling

Avoid pinching



Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.

Avoid screaming around



Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.