

INFORMATION ON DOG SAFETY

*How to help keep your child safe
around dogs in and out of the home*





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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Owner of Dogable Dog Training

I am an experienced, certified dog trainer with a particular interest in child-dog interactions. I have always been passionate about providing dog-based education to children due to the lack of knowledge I had when growing up with my rescue dog, Sandy. I didn't get things right back then, but I am grateful to know better now. It is a privilege to support children with making better choices when interacting with dogs in and out of the home.

I am proud to be the only Kids Around Dogs Approved Professional in Cheltenham, whereby I undergo annual reviews to ensure I uphold the highest standards in my work. This resource has been made to provide further information to parents and caregivers like yourself following one of my "How to Speak Dog" assemblies at your child's school.



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DOGS AND CHILD SAFETY

77% of dog bites occur within the home by the family's dog, or by a dog known to the family. Since the pandemic, there has been a staggering 26% rise in dog attacks. This means education for both children and adults is essential to avoid these traumatic, and sometimes fatal, incidents.

What can I do?

- Learn about dog body language, including signs of stress
- Support your child with having appropriate interactions with dogs
- Name any action your child does well to encourage them to do this more in the future (i.e., "I love how you are gently stroking his back, that is really nice.")
- Actively supervise interactions between your child and any dog
- Implement management in the home for when you cannot supervise
- Never leave a child and dog unattended

Who can help?

If you would like support with understanding your dog's behaviour around your child (and vice versa), you can get in touch with myself directly.

Alternatively, I recommend reviewing the below directories for qualified, vetted professionals:

- [Kids Around Dogs](#)
- [Pet Professional Network](#)
- [Institute of Modern Dog Trainers](#)
- [Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors](#)

HOW TO SPEAK DOG

Dogs are sentient beings, with emotions similar to ours. Whilst we may experience more complex emotional states and thoughts, dogs have been shown to display: excitement, distress, contentment, joy, fear, disgust, anger, suspicion/shyness, affection/love. This is equivalent to the emotional capacity of a child around 2-3 years of age.

How to succeed with understanding dogs

- Take time to learn how to identify a happy vs scared dog. Dogs often react negatively due to fear, and rarely due to true aggression. By reading this booklet, you are already making a great first step
- Consider the whole context - what else is going on around the dog (i.e., other dogs, guests, noisy toys, practising training in a busy place)? Is the environment getting too much for the dog? Do they need a break from it all in a quieter room or by having a walk around?
- Is the dog unwell, in pain, or perhaps feeling hot and bothered? Physical discomfort leads to irritability in dogs - just like it does for us humans
- Think about how you can make the dog feel better when they display signs of discomfort. This may be requesting others give them space, moving them behind a barrier, or stopping an interaction completely. Sniffing around is a fantastic self-soothing behaviour - could you scatter some food/treats on grass or around the floor for the dog?

THE MOUTH

Typically, an open mouth with the tongue resting on the bottom or lolling to the side is a sign of a happy, relaxed dog. A closed, tense mouth often signifies a worried dog. However, your dog may also have a closed mouth if they are concentrating, such as whilst you are training them.

Happy/Relaxed



Sad/Worried



THE EARS

Ears that are resting at the side of the head or in a neutral, upright position suggests a happy, relaxed dog. Ears flattened backwards often signifies a worried dog. In contrast, when a dog's ears are pushed forward, it may mean they are alert or displaying confidence.

Happy/Relaxed



Sad/Worried



THE TAIL

A tail which is wagging with sweeping motions side-to-side is often a sign of a happy, relaxed dog - especially if their backside is wiggling as a result. A low, stiff tail or one which is tucked under the rear is a clear sign of a worried dog. Be aware that a high, straight wagging tail can be a sign of aggression - not all wagging tails equal a friendly dog.

Happy/Relaxed



Sad/Worried



CALMING SIGNALS

Calming signals are behaviours dogs perform to request space in a given moment. The aim of these behaviours is to avoid conflict, diffuse tension, and communicate discomfort. These are commonly seen in dog-dog communication, as dogs avoid conflict whenever possible. These behaviours get shown to us too, most often during handling/stoking, or when we do things around our dogs that make them feel uneasy. Calming signals can also be seen when a dog is approached whilst enjoying a resource (i.e., toy/food/resting in their bed).

These should be viewed as “whispers”. When we respond accordingly to these whispers by giving a dog space, they will then not feel a need to “shout” by growling, lunging, snapping or biting. It is only when calming signals are ignored, does a dog escalate further.



Whale Eye

The whites of the eye showing, particularly at the sides of the eye. This is a request for an interaction to slow down or stop altogether.



Head Turn

During an interaction - whether it be as a dog is approached, physical touch or training - a dog may turn their head away to communicate worry or confusion.

CALMING SIGNALS CONT.



Yawning

Unlike us, dogs rarely yawn when tired.

Yawning is far more often a form of communication, particularly if it isn't their bedtime and they haven't just woken up. This is one us humans often misinterpret and we may accidentally label a dog who is uncomfortable or worried as "tired".



Shake Off

If a dog isn't wet, then a shake off is a way for them to expel excess energy. After handling, hearing a loud noise, or reacting to another dog, your dog may shake off to try and relax after feeling uncomfortable. However, you may also spot dogs shaking off during play to calm themselves down from excitement!



Lip Lick

A flick of the tongue, often touching the nose. If there is no food around, this is likely being done as a form of communication to request space.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

As children and dogs interact day-to-day, active supervision is vital to ensure both are having a good time. If you see any situations like the ones below, call your child away and give them an alternative activity to do instead. If possible, you should explain to them how their behaviour impacts their dog's emotions ("When you cuddle Fido tightly, he can feel scared as dogs don't like cuddles. If you want a cuddle, you can ask me for one or you can cuddle your teddy as much as you want!").

Ears back

Head turned away



Whale eye

Tense, closed mouth

Ears being pulled

Head turned away



Whale eye

Tense, closed mouth

Held with two hands
- one hand contact
only for children

Child's face in
dog's face



Big, exaggerated yawn

Muzzle being handled/poked

Ears pinned back



Tense, closed mouth

Tight, narrow space

RESOURCES

Where to pet your dog



1 THE HEAD

The majority of dogs do not like us touching the top of their head.

2 THE BACK

This is a nice place to have 'scratches' and 'strokes'. Always move your hand away after a short time to see if the dog still wants you to continue.

3 THE TAIL

The majority of dogs do not like us touching their tails.

4 THE TUMMY

This is for family only. If you are unfamiliar to the dog, we do not advise you touch the dog's tummy.

5 THE LEGS AND PAWS

A lot of dogs do not like you touching their legs or paws.

6 THE CHIN AND CHEST

This is a nice place to have 'gentle strokes'. Always move your hand away after a short time to see if the dog still wants you to continue.



www.kidsarounddogs.co.uk



BeKind Rescue

www.bekindrescue.com



STOPTHE77.COM

STAY SAFE AROUND THE DOGS YOU KNOW

THEIR BODY



Pet dogs gently with one hand, collar to tail (not on the head).



Sit WITH dogs, not ON them.



DON'T dress up dogs.



DON'T kiss, hug or pick up dogs.

THEIR FEELINGS



Learn what dogs are saying and listen when they need you.



Be kind. Do things dogs like.

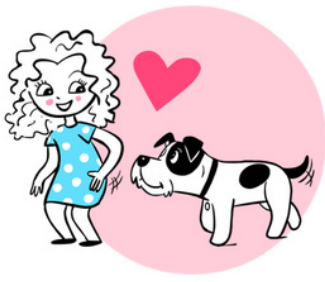


DON'T yell, scare, hurt or tease dogs.

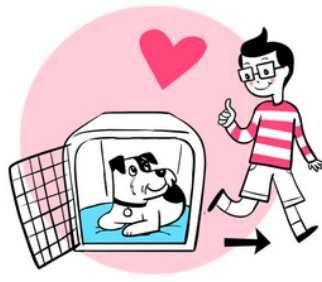


DON'T be bossy (or make dogs do things they don't want to).

RESPECT



Always invite dogs into YOUR space instead of going into theirs.



Walk away from dogs when they're in crates or resting anywhere.



Train and play with dogs using treats and toys.



Let grown ups take care of dogs when they have something they shouldn't.



DON'T go up to dogs when they're eating or chewing.



DON'T put your face in dogs' faces.

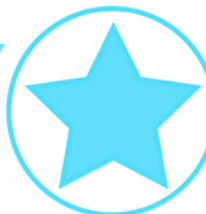


DON'T take anything from dogs...



...EVEN if it's yours! Ask a grown up for help.

CREATED BY



thefamilydog®

THEIR SPACE

THEIR STUFF

THEFAMILYDOG.COM

The 5 Types of Supervision

1



ABSENT

Adult not in room with dog and baby/toddler



2



PASSIVE

Adult in same location but distracted and not watching



3



REACTIVE

Responding after dog or child is too close



4



PROACTIVE

Planning and preparing safe separation.



5



ACTIVE

Full awake adult supervision



How Kids SHOULD Interact with Dogs

Use common sense.

Be polite and kind to pets



Learn to recognize when your dog is scared or anxious



Play appropriate games with pets, such as:

Fetch



Training tricks (like roll over, shake, beg, etc.)

Walking and running with a dog



Playing hide-n-seek

Always remember:

Supervise all interactions. Accidents can happen in a split second.



Train your dog to associate the kids with positive experiences so he'll be more likely to tolerate your child in case she accidentally interacts inappropriately.



Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS
The Art and Science of Animal Behavior

For additional free dog bite prevention resources and more dog behavior books and products, visit www.drSophiaYin.com.



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.

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WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF A DOG JUMPS AT YOU?
OR IF A DOG RUNS TOWARDS YOU?
OR IF A DOG BARKS AT YOU?

BE A STATUE

CROSS YOUR ARMS
OVER YOUR CHEST!

BE STILL AND QUIET!

WAIT UNTIL THE DOG
LOSES INTEREST
AND MOVES AWAY!



WWW.KIDSAROUNDDOGS.CO.UK



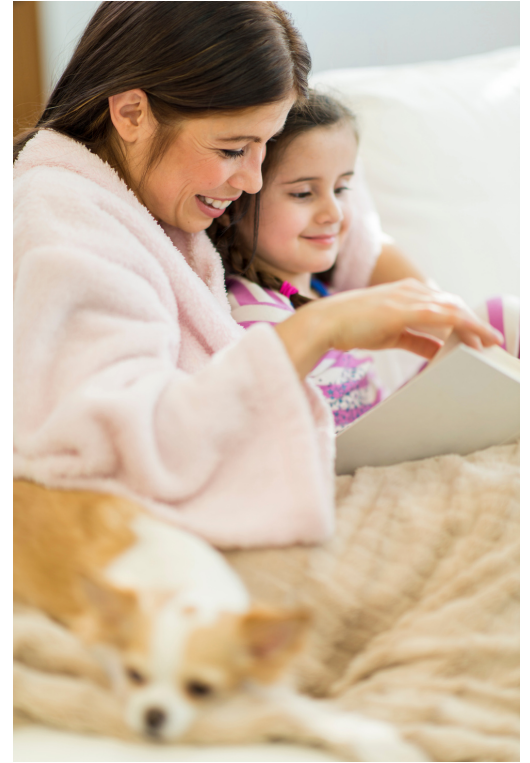
What is your dog saying?

<p>"OK I'm out of options...back off or I'll have no option but to bite to make this stop."</p>		Bite
		Snap
		Lunge
		Deep / powerful bark
		Growl
		Stare (unable to look away)
<p>"PLEASE listen and take me seriously... I'm getting more and more worried. I can't cope."</p>		Stiff, tense body
		Lying on back, belly exposed
		Submissive urination
		Cowering with tail tucked
<p>"My request for space isn't working...I don't know what to do."</p>		Walking away
		Sniffing the floor, scratching self and other 'faffing' behaviours
<p>"I'm feeling uncomfortable about the situation or someone in it. Please give me space."</p>		Lifting paw, turning body away
		Turning head away
		Avoiding eye contact
		Yawning
		Lip lick / nose flick with tongue
<p>"I'm comfortable in this situation - life is good."</p>		Loose face and body muscles
		Relaxed body language

RECOMMENDED READING

For Children

- Doggie Language - Lili Chin
- Should I Pat Pat? - Monique Rowe
- Ask the Dog - Joanne Hinds
- What Dogs Like - Joanne Hinds
- Hey Dog! Let's Talk! - Wendy Keefer
- Hey Dog! Sniffs are for feet! - Wendy Keefer
- Why Don't You Listen? - Hannah Capon
- Jack & Billy Puppy Tales - Steven Goodall & Sally Bradbury
- Easy Peasy Awesome Pawsome Dog Training for Kids - Steve Mann
- Dragons, Unicorns, Chimeras & Clickers - Laura VanArendonk Baugh
- Zara DogDog Club: In the sun - Anna Crichton
- Zara DogDog Club: On the school run - Anna Crichton
- Don't Hug Dug! - Francesca Lees



For Parents

- Dogs, Bumps and Babies - Aileen Stevenson
- Easy Peasy Puppy/Doggy Squeezy - Steve Mann
- Dog Training & Behaviour - Shay Kelly
- Adore Your Adolescent Dog - Jo Sellers
- Stop Walking Your Dog - Niki French
- Taking the Grrr out of Grooming Your Dog - Sue Williamson
- Dog is Love - Dr. Clive Wynne
- Our Dogs, Ourselves - Alexandra Horowitz
- Help! My Dog is Destroying the Garden: How to have a garden friendly dog - Karen Bush & Toni Shelbourne
- Mission Control: How to Train the High-Drive Dog - Jane Arden
- Canine Confidential - Mark Bekoff

Thanks for reading!

I hope this information is useful and you feel better prepared for keeping your child safe around dogs.

If you have any questions regarding this content or how I can support your child with their fear of dogs, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



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