

You may have the most even tempered, sweet-as-pie dog on the planet but you never know and cannot guarantee that your child may not accidentally poke your dog in the eye causing pain and a reaction resulting in a bite. The first instinct a dog in pain may have is to bite. This is a normal reaction. Many dogs every year bite without the intention of hurting but out of pain and as a result are euthanized. Supervision is key

2. Ensure appropriate interactions

Even the most well behaved dog if pushed to the limits may bite. Even if your dog tolerates something do not assume they enjoy or like it. If we really think about it, it makes sense that the following scenarios may result in a dog biting.

- Taking food away or sticking hands in food bowls
- Pulling, yanking or poking
- Staring directly in the eyes of the dog
- Hugging and kissing
- Climbing on top of or stepping on
- Startling or waking
- Loud screaming or overly excitable behavior
- Hugging, sticking our face in their face

Appropriate interactions:

- *Petting chest gently*
- *Teaching dog fun tricks*
- *Taking the dog on a walk or hike*
- *Brushing dog gently*

3. Understand dog body language

Dogs often give warning signs when they are uncomfortable or need space. Understanding what they mean, which is often quite different than the identical human gestures, is very important. Here's an easy way to gauge whether a dog enjoys or wants to be pet:

Dog Likes Petting

- They initiate it by moving into your space
- They put their head or body under your hand
- They pull your hand toward them with their paw
- The muscles of their face are relaxed
- Their eyes get droopy
- They flop their body down like a rag doll
- They flop their body onto YOU

Dog Doesn't Like Petting

- They duck their head away when you reach for them
- They move away
- They look away
- They leave the area
- They yawn
- They scratch themselves
- They lick their lips
- They lift a paw
- They show "whale eye" (whites of eyes showing more than normal)

4. Teach your child dog safety rules 'do's'

- Do ask permission before petting or approaching a dog
- Do play safe games with your dog like fetch or play hide and seek with a toy
- Do ask an adult for help if the dog has stolen a toy or is doing something wrong
- Do be a tree if a strange dog approaches or if the dog you are playing with becomes too rough.
Plant your feet, arms at your side, stare at the ground.