



Dog Safety at Home and While Visiting

Creating safe interactions between children and dogs at home and while visiting others.



Always Watch Closely.

Stay within arm's reach whenever young children and dogs are together. If you can't actively watch both, separate them with a baby gate, crate, or closed door until an adult can supervise.

Respect Your Dog's Safe Space.

Every dog needs a quiet place to rest and recharge. Teach children never to enter a dog's crate, bed, or favorite resting spot, and never call or pull them out of their safe space.

Let the Dog Choose the Interaction.

Ask the owner's permission before petting. Offer your hand and allow the dog to approach first. If the dog walks away or doesn't come to you, respect their choice and give them space.

Pet Gently and Safely.

Pet the dog's chest, shoulders, or back. Avoid hugging, climbing on, kissing, or pulling the ears, tail, or face, as these actions can make a dog feel trapped or uncomfortable.

Respect When a Dog Walks Away.

If a dog leaves the interaction, do not chase, corner, or force them to come back. Giving dogs the freedom to walk away helps prevent fear-based bites and builds safer interactions.

Leave Dogs Alone During Meals and Rest.

Never disturb a dog while they are eating, drinking, enjoying a treat, chewing a toy, or sleeping. Dogs may become protective or startled during these activities, increasing the risk of a bite.

Learn Your Dog's Warning Signs.

A dog may need space if they turn their head away, yawn, lick their lips, or suddenly become very still. When you notice these signals, calmly stop interacting and step away.





Dog Safety in Your Community

Helping families build safe habits around dogs
in public spaces and throughout the community.



Always check with the owner before you approach a dog.

Not all dogs want to be greeted or petted. The dog may not be in the mood to interact, and the owner can let you know whether it is okay to approach.

Approach dogs calmly and respectfully.

With the owner's permission, move slowly and let the dog sniff you. If the dog appears calm and comfortable, gently pet their shoulders, chest or back.

Never reach through or over a fence to pet a dog.

Even friendly dogs may protect their home or yard and may bite if they feel threatened.

Stay calm around unfamiliar dogs.

Keep children close and avoid approaching the dog, even if they appear friendly. Do not scream, run away from or chase a dog. Sudden movements may frighten the dog or trigger its instinct to chase.

If a loose dog approaches you, "Be a Tree."

Stand still with your feet together, arms at your sides, and look down quietly until the dog loses interest.

Use caution when dogs approach each other.

Even friendly dogs may react aggressively toward another dog. Give dogs space and never reach between dogs that are fighting.

Watch the dog's body language.

Give the dog space if they are growling, barking, showing their teeth, have a stiff body, or their ears are pinned back.

Avoid dogs that appear sick, injured or frightened.

Dogs in pain or under stress may bite, even if they are normally friendly.

Respect a dog's space.

Do not corner, surround or block a dog's path. Give unfamiliar dogs plenty of room to move away if they choose.

