

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

Of Bite Prevention for Kids

According to the American Humane Association, dog bites are the number one public health problem for children. This is more so than measles, mumps and whooping cough combined. More than 47 percent of all reported dog bites involve children. To keep your kids safe, teach them the following rules about interacting with dogs.

1. Treat dogs with respect. Don't tease them by poking a stick through the fence, and don't ever provoke them into growling, barking, lunging or otherwise acting aggressively.
2. Don't chase dogs or encourage them to chase you.
3. Avoid strange dogs. Never go onto someone else's property or approach a strange dog to pet it.
4. Ask before petting someone else's dog, even if you know the dog well. The dog could have a sore ear that morning and your gentle pat on that exact spot could cause the dog to bite you.
5. Don't run or scream around dogs. Quick movements and high-pitched squeals can frighten a dog, causing it to bite.
6. Respect a dog's privacy. Never bother a dog when it's eating, in its crate or dog house, behind a fence or in a car.
7. Don't stare at a dog. To dogs, staring is perceived as a threat, and they can react aggressively.
8. Don't grab bones, balls or other toys from a dog.
9. Never stick your hand into a dog fight. Find an adult to help.
10. Warning signs of an angry dog include: barking, growling, snarling with teeth showing, ear laid flat, legs stiff, tail up and hair standing up on the dog's back. If a dog looks this way, slowly walk away sideways. Never stare at it or run away. If the dog attacks, curl up in a ball and protect your face.

-Kim Campbell Thornton