As a supporter of the Bite Prevention Programme we would like to thank you by offering you a discount on a magazine subscription via CoolMags.com. To continue learning about becoming a responsible pet owner, subscribe to Animaltalk. Or have a look at the other magazines for family edutainment.

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Most parents appreciate the positive impact canine companions have on children. Growing up with a dog in the home is a privilege and adds to the quality of life of a child. Unfortunately, in some cases, dogs have the opposite effect. Dog attacks where children are the victims still happen far too often and the dogs are usually blamed. But should you look more carefully at these unfortunate cases, the one aspect that stands out like a sore thumb, is ignorance. Many dog attacks can be prevented if parents and dog owners inform themselves about the warning signs and canine behaviour in general.

A child does not instinctively know how to behave when around dogs or how to appropriately interact with dogs. Children have to be taught these things and that is where this booklet on bite prevention comes in. It is a useful guide to help teach children how to behave around dogs and will help you educate your child. As a dog owner this booklet is designed to assist you with following the correct approach when it comes to puppy socialisation and dog training and management. Please use this guide to your own benefit (as well as that of your best friend), but also help spread the word by sharing the information with friends and family. Knowledge is power!

Greetings
Johann Theron
Editor, Animaltalk

Welcome to When dogs bite back

Animaltalk has partnered with Paws for People® to bring awareness and knowledge to the public about how to prevent people, especially children, from getting bitten by dogs. We will show you what to look out for, and positive ways to interact correctly with your dogs. We hope you find this information very helpful.

PAWS FOR PEOPLE®
Paws for People® Therapy Dogs is a non-profit organisation. Their mission is to responsibly bring together dogs and people in a warm, non-threatening and educational manner, encouraging them to interact positively through a controlled and friendly approach. The dogs assist with therapy for patients in rehab, special learning needs children, abused and abandoned children, as well as physically challenged patients.

Lesley de Klerk and the handlers enjoy assisting their dogs in interacting with young and old alike. They regularly visit homes for the elderly and the young, hospital wards with cancer patients and sick children, and children and adults with physical and mental disabilities, to give them the unconditional love and joy that they need – the dogs serve as facilitators to bring love and hope.

Paws for People® also visits schools on a regular basis to teach children about the work they do as well as about dogs in general, bite prevention and responsible pet ownership.

They present workshops and seminars to the public and professionals, and attend expos and shows to promote their work.

To find out more about what Paws for People® offers and how you can get involved, and for any upcoming events, you can contact Lesley and the Paws for People® team on the contact details below.

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Kids and dogs: How kids should and should not interact with dogs

Copyright Dr Sophia Yin, DVM, MS – www.drsophiayin.com (adapted for South Africa)

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.

Distributed in South Africa by Paws for People®
When a child is bitten by a four-legged family member, it can turn the household upside-down. Owners feel puzzled and confused. “They sleep together all the time,” they might say, or, “He’s always been really good. He even lets Timmy sit on him.” In the majority of cases, the bite seems out of the blue. The humans can’t fathom why their once-trusted companion would bite an innocent child. But anyone who ‘reads dog’ or can see life from the pet’s point of view would most likely say, “I’m surprised it didn’t happen sooner.”

The fact is, a quick perusal of YouTube or a thorough investigation of a bite reveals that often the bite occurs because humans, especially children, are extremely rude. Parents may view their kid’s behaviour as cute and assume that because their dog is tolerating the behaviour now, he will have an endless fuse and always put up with it, rather than eventually exploding. In other words, parents expect dogs to behave like saints, even when they are pestered to the point that would try the average human’s patience and cause her to blow up!

For instance, I recall one tragic case where an infant was left at home with the babysitter and the family Pit Bull. The infant was allowed to incessantly crawl after the dog. He followed her from corner to corner as she kept trying to get away from the baby, but the dog had no escape. Ordinarily, a person being pestered this way with no way to escape would eventually turn and yell and possibly even resort to violence. A dog might do the same – turn and bark, snarl, or growl. But when all of these early signs are ignored, escalation to a bite can be the next step. Unfortunately, a bite by any large dog at her wits’ end can cause serious damage to a child, and in this case it resulted in death.

More often than not, cases where the dog bites a young child are tragic – often more so for the dog. The dog may be relinquished to a shelter, where he has a low probability of safe adoption. Or he may be euthanised after a quarantine period. The worst part of the story is that these bites could often have easily been prevented just by understanding the types of actions that drive a dog to feel bullied or pestered so much that he feels he has to bite.

DID YOU KNOW?
Humans take around 21 years to mature, but your dog takes about a year and a half
Understanding why the actions that might cause the family dog to bite are common sense

In fact, understanding what can drive a dog to bite the family kids is pretty simple.

**REASON 1:** Most people dislike it when others stick their hands into their food. Similarly, dogs want to eat in peace.

**REASON 2:** We teach children that it’s clearly wrong to steal toys from each other. It’s also rude to steal toys from the dog. Kids should be taught to leave Fido’s toys alone. To build in a tolerance in case the child makes a mistake when your attention has lapsed, dogs should be trained to give up their toy for a reward or even a sequence of rewards. That way, they will willingly give the child the toy instead of feeling possessive.
REASON 3: Kids frequently can’t help but get in your face. They often have to be trained to maintain the appropriate social distance. Similarly, a child putting her face into a dog’s face, even if it’s all in the family, can be irritating to the dog, especially when the dog has no control over the child’s behaviour.

REASON 4: Most people dislike being disturbed when they are resting or sleeping. But fortunately for us humans, we can often close or lock our bedroom door. Similarly, dogs need a safe location where they can be away from kids and excitement. Kids should avoid bugging them in their ‘private’ location or any time they are sleeping or resting. If they call the dog from far away and the dog chooses to get up and come over to the child, this type of interaction is okay. But if the dog chooses to be left alone, he should be.
REASON 5: Kids dislike being handled roughly, and so do dogs. Dogs can be trained to tolerate or sometimes even enjoy this handling, so that they are not reactive when an accident occurs, but in general children should be taught to be polite.

REASON 6: It’s rude to climb on, step on, or otherwise invade someone’s personal space. It’s also rude to do the same things with dogs.

REASON 7: Loud screaming can frazzle humans, imagine its effect on the more sound-sensitive dog!

DID YOU KNOW?
Dogs have twice as many muscles to move their ears as people.
REASON 8: We often forget that even some friendly gestures, such as pinching a child’s cheeks, may be irritating. In general, dogs dislike being hugged, even by family members. You can tell by the expression on their face. You can train dogs, especially as puppies, to enjoy cuddling, hugging and other close handling. But even so, it’s important for children to know the types of interactions their pet likes and also to realise that other dogs may not have the same tolerance as their dog does.

Types of child-dog interactions that are appropriate

With all of these DON’Ts, it must seem like kids can’t interact with pets at all. In reality, they just need to be taught to be polite and kind to pets, instead of treating their companion like he’s a stuffed animal. Parents should also teach their children to read the signs that Fido is fearful or anxious, so that the child knows to back off.

Once the children understand that they should be kind to their pet, they can be taught appropriate games to play. For instance, a game of fetch, where the dog willingly gives the toy and remains polite before it’s tossed, is fun for dogs who love to retrieve. Pets love to learn tricks that result in rewards such as yummy treats or bits of the dog’s meal/kibble and kids love to teach them. All dogs need their exercise, and kids can be a part of this too if the dog is well-trained. Hide-n-seek is a great way for dogs to learn to have fun, and the dog is practising his search and rescue skills.
Adults should ensure that the dog has lots of positive associations with the kids. The kids can regularly give food rewards for the dog’s calm, polite behaviour, such as automatic sits.

Even if the child is generally well-behaved and the dog very tolerant, it’s essential for all interactions to be supervised. Accidents can happen in a split second.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Domestic dogs can hear significantly higher frequency sounds than humans, although not as high as cats.
A final take-home message

The key is to teach the dog as well as the children to be polite. Make sure your children interact with your dog the same way you want them to interact with you. Follow these simple dos and don’ts and everyone will be safer and happier.
ACTIVITIES

After reading the booklet, answer the following questions

1. Dogs usually enjoy a scratch on the side of the neck.  
   [ ] True  [ ] False

2. Name two games that are appropriate to play with your dog. ..............................................................
   ............................................................................................................................................................................................

3. A dog with his tail between his legs is scared and should be left alone.  [ ] True  [ ] False

4. Name one situation where you should not disturb your dog. ................................................................
   ............................................................................................................................................................................................

5. Dogs like hugs and kisses.  
   [ ] True  [ ] False

6. When you approach a dog, you should:
   a) Run up to him.
   b) Approach slowly and let the dog come to you.
   c) Touch him without asking the owner permission.

7. Which of the following is appropriate to a dog?
   a) Climbing on top of the dog.
   b) Putting your face into the dog’s face.
   c) Talking softly to the dog.

8. When is a good time to give your dog a treat?
   a) When he is sitting.
   b) After he has performed a trick you taught him.
   c) All of the above.
More info

Did you enjoy what you learned so far in this booklet? Did you find it helpful and would you like to know more?

To continue learning and for more information on becoming a responsible pet owner, subscribe to Animaltalk.

Animaltalk magazine is a great source of information for all things animals! Animaltalk is available nationwide at all leading retailers, or you can go to www.coolmags.com, get a subscription, and never miss an issue! You can also email subscriptions@panorama.co.za.

Visit animalchannel.co.za and the Animaltalk Magazine Facebook page for articles and interesting snippets to help you increase your knowledge.

You can contact Paws for People® for any of the following:
• If you would like Paws for People® to do a presentation at your school or company.
• If you are interested in attending a workshop to become a Bite Prevention Teacher, or if you are a dog professional (responsible breeder or a veterinarian).

TO ORDER COPIES of this When dogs bite back booklet to hand out at your veterinary clinic, school, company, or even to new puppy owners if you are a breeder, contact Lesley de Klerk from Paws for People® (see contact details below). Or simply order your booklets from www.coolmags.com.

There is a small fee per booklet ordered. The price covers printing costs, and any profit will be put back into producing and distributing more booklets. Booklets must be handed out for free and cannot be sold.

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COOL CROSSWORD
See if you can work out the clues and fill in the crossword!

Across:
1 | This is a game you can play with your dog, where you throw a ball and he brings it back.
4 | You should never disturb a dog while he is ____________ (clue: not awake).
6 | Never try to steal a dog’s ____________ (clue: something he plays with).
9 | This is a noise a dog makes when he is angry.
10 | This is a command you can teach your dog (clue: opposite of stand).

Down:
1 | Never bother a dog while he’s eating his __________.
2 | You can reward your dog for good behaviour by giving him a __________ (clue: something yummy to eat).
3 | If you don’t treat a dog politely, he may _________ you.
5 | You can ________ games with your dog, like hide-n-seek.
6 | Never pull on your dog’s ________ (clue: it’s on his bum!).
7 | You may enjoy it, but you should never ________ a dog (clue: squeeze him tight).
8 | Dogs’ ears are sensitive so you should not ________ around them (clue: yell).

Answers: 
Across: 1 | Fetch, 2 | Treat, 3 | Bite, 4 | Asleep, 6 | Toy, 9 | Growl, 10 | Sit
Down: 1 | Food, 2 | Treat, 3 | Bite, 5 | Play, 6 | Tail, 7 | Hug, 8 | Shout
Time for some fun!

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE
Look at this picture of a boy playing with his dog. At first glance, these two pictures may look exactly the same. But if you look closely, you will see seven differences in the bottom one.

ANSWERS
The colour of the boy's pants changed from brown to red; the Frisbee's colour changed from red to yellow; one of the flowers in the bottom right corner changed from yellow to pink; the colour of the dog's collar changed from red to blue; the marking on the dog's back changed from black to light yellow; one of the flowers in the bottom right corner changed from yellow to pink; the colour of the boy's pants changed from brown to red; the Frisbee's colour changed from red to yellow.
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