



Dog Talk™ the Radio Show

Dog Talk Newsletter

(September 2006, Edition 4)

"School's Back In! More on Kids and Dogs"

Ways to Protect Your Children with Dogs

With school starting again, you may be thinking of getting a dog for your child (a MUCH better idea than at Christmas time!). If there is a dog in your plans, I do hope you'll visit your local shelters and rescue groups to find a deserving soul looking for a safe harbor. But before you do that, it's good to do a check-up of your family situation and make sure your child(ren) is well prepared to share her life with a pooch.

Dogs are not four-legged humans and their methods of communication are entirely different. The "language" of dogs - their body language - has to be taught to children like any foreign language so that signals from the dog are not misinterpreted. It's so important to teach a child from an early age how a dog thinks, what makes him tick and how to avoid provoking him into unwanted behavior. Here are some ways you can protect your children when around dogs:

- **Kids often aren't taught the way to approach and handle a dog.** They may provoke a dog by petting him while he is eating. They may startle a dog who is sleeping. They may want to hug or kiss a dog who naturally experiences these actions as aggressive.
- **Some children may tease and taunt a dog for fun.** Any teasing is ultimately unpleasant for a dog, even if he seems to go along with it at first. Excessive teasing can cause a dog to lash out in frustration.
- **Identify potentially dangerous situations.** An adult needs to continually assess possible risks for injury or inappropriate behavior between the dog and the child. By anticipating problems, you can minimize the danger. This may mean that dogs and children should be separated at high-risk times such as birthday parties, when you might want to consider restricting the dog to a locked bedroom - locked so that no child can inadvertently open the door.
- **Monitor children's interactions with the dogs if anything changes in the household.** Has a new child entered the picture? Is a child or the dog tired, sick or upset? All this can affect the dog's behavior and reactions.
- **Grown-ups need to be alert to any situation that creates stress for the child or the dog.** Examples can be as simple as a car ride, guests visiting, holiday events and parties, or the arrival of a strange dog.
- **Parents who have difficulty setting safe boundaries for their children's behavior toward the family dog may wind up with a pet who becomes fearful and anxious about that child** - and so "on edge" that he may

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The Dog Bible



Tracie Hotchner is author of The Dog Bible: Everything Your Dog Wants You to Know

(Gotham Books,
November 2005)

[Click here to go to
The Dog Bible website.](#)

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be easily provoked to bite any child.

- **Do not expect a child under six to be responsible for a pet** or to have a full understanding of the risks involved in handling a dog.

Having said all this, there's still no sweeter return home from a day at school than to have a trusty pooch waiting with your milk and cookies when you get off the bus!

[Click here to read the entire article \(PDF file\).](#)

These tips are excerpted from Tracie Hotchner's "The Dog Bible: Everything Your Dog Wants You to Know."
[Click here to go to The Dog Bible website](#)
to read more tips about "all things dog".

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What's Comin' Up

These shows will be posted to the website on the scheduled dates:

Sept. 15: "Puppy Mills"

Oct. 1: "When Dogs are Violent"

Oct 15: "Pocket Dogs"

Nov 1: "Metro Dogs"

Animal Radio



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