



TIPS FOR KIDS FROM THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

ALWAYS ASK A DOG'S OWNER IF YOU MAY PET THE DOG.

There may be a very good reason why a dog should not be touched. He may be "on duty" as a handicapped person's assistance dog, or he may be injured, ill, or afraid of children.

APPROACH A DOG FROM THE FRONT OR SIDE.

Hold your hands low and speak softly. Surprising a dog from behind, forcing him into a corner, waving hands in the air, or screaming may overexcite him, causing him to snap in fear or even in play.

LET A DOG EAT IN PEACE.

If there's one place a dog may get defensive, it's at the food dish. Your dog shouldn't growl when you get near his dish, but you shouldn't interfere with his eating.

WATCH OUT FOR SPECIAL TOYS.

Some dogs have powerful feelings for their balls or chew toys. Never take a bone or toy from a dog's mouth unless you have trained him to drop it and give it to you first.

AVOID TEASING, ROUGH WRESTLING, OR TUG-OF-WAR GAMES.

Dogs may get too enthusiastic in these sorts of games and forget you're not a dog. Fetch, Frisbee, hide and seek, agility courses, and flyball are better outlets for your dog's energy.

RESPECT A DOG'S SPACE.

Dogs naturally defend their territories. Sticking your hand inside a strange dog's pen or in a car window where a dog is sitting may put him in a defensive situation and he might bite to protect his territory.

LEAVE FIGHTING DOGS ALONE.

Do not try to break up a dogfight! Most fights end quickly, but it's a good idea to remain quiet and get an adult who can stop the fight with a garden hose or lemon juice in a squirt bottle. Trying to separate or yelling at fighting dogs makes them more excited, and they might turn on you.

OBSERVE DOG BODY LANGUAGE.

Dogs normally resort to biting only when they think you haven't listened to their warnings. Watch out for a dog who is barking, growling, or showing his teeth. Beware if his ears are back, legs stiff, tail up, or hair standing up on his back. Slowly walk away and say "No" firmly, arms by your side. Do not scream, stare into his eyes, or run away. If you run, he will chase you and may attack.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS WHAT YOU KNOW.

When friends come to your house, introduce them to your dog and explain the house rules. When you're out, share your knowledge. The more everyone knows about dogs, the better world it will be for dogs and people.