

Don't allow the kid to touch the dog on the head or tail. Ears and tails are too easy to grab and pull; eyes can be poked with inquiring fingers. Keep the child's hands away from the underside of a male dog, for there are things to grab there, too. Praise your kid for doing it right. "You're a good dog petter!" may be more effective than "No, no!"

Teach your dog to lick the kids' hands but never to use teeth or claws. Be careful about faces. Dogs probably should not lick babies' faces, though they often want to very much for they are loaded with yummys after a meal. Be guided by your child's reaction. If the baby does not like having her/his face licked, don't let the dog do it, but if the kid loves it, OK. Watch for teeth, if the yummys are dried on a bit. Pulling off hard, sticky yummys often requires teeth, from the dog's point of view. Mom or dad's hands must be right there.

Don't assume that anybody is going to remember these lessons for more than a few seconds. BE THERE.

IACP MISSION STATEMENT

The International Association of Canine Professionals is an organization established to maintain the highest standards of professional and business practice among canine professionals. Its aim is to provide support and representation for all professional occupations involved with any aspect of canine management, health, training and husbandry.

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CHILDREN AND DOGS

by Dorothy C. Dunning



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Kids should have higher social status in the family than the dog, but they may be too young to be taken seriously as dominants by the dog. Even a child who's taller than the dog is not as well armed – or he or she had better not be.

- The dog has much bigger teeth
- The child is relatively defenseless.

In a wolf pack, the young pups are outside the hierarchy. They certainly do not dominate any of the adults, but the adults defer to them and put up with all sorts of misbehavior because they are puppies.

- An Alpha male wolf will carry food to his puppies and encourage them to take it from his mouth.
- An Alpha female allows her puppies to climb all over her, to bite her tail and ears, to growl and snarl and act like puppies.
- The Alphas protect the puppies from the youngest of their older siblings, the yearlings.
- Thus the subordinates learn to be similarly tolerant of the pups.

This tolerance ceases abruptly when the pups hit adolescence, at around 6 months. From then on, it is up to each pup to find its place in the hierarchy, starting at the bottom. This is not a happy time in the life of a young wolf and most of them die, of starvation if not from dominant-inflicted wounds. So how do you apply this to

your own families? (Clue: Death is not an option.)

- Do not expect a young child to dominate a dog, even a dog younger than the kid.
- Don't give the kid responsibility for the dog's behavior. Your child can learn to train the dog, but an Alpha human must be present at all times, especially when both the dog and the child are young.

Food bowl train both the children and the dog

- Children must leave the dog alone at mealtime unless Mom or Dad is right there, with hands within 6 inches.
- If the dog is absolutely, positively steady on its Stay, the child can put down the food dish. Then step away when Mom or Dad says, before the dog is released.
- This tells the dog that the child has high status, but don't expect the dog to accept this. Stand by to assert your Alpha status and protect your child.

With adolescent humans, it's a judgement call (what isn't?) Some teenagers are really good with dogs and learn easily to train them. Others lose interest and wonder why the dog doesn't "listen" to them. The same teenager may be responsible sometimes and on another planet at other times. That's normal, human adolescent behavior. So nobody knows what to expect, including the dog. As a result the pooch learns to ignore

or distrust the teenager. None of these outcomes is the fault of the dog. The dog is ultimately the responsibility of the adult humans of the family.

If you have a puppy, watch the relationships with the kids when the dog hits adolescence.

- If your child has a good, buddy-type relationship with the dog, it's reasonable to hope it'll continue, but keep a parental eye on the situation.
- If the dog starts pushing the limits (see Alpha behavior list), step in like an Alpha wolf with a yearling.
- You set the rules, and your adolescent dog is not allowed to come the Heavy with your kids. Period.

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER allow a dog and a young child (newborn through preschooler) to be together without an Alpha person's hand within 6 inches.

- Babies and puppies routinely hurt each other badly, for neither is old enough to know how not to.
- The outcome of these episodes is not pleasant for anyone. The youngster learns to fear dogs, and the puppy learns to hate kids.
- Keep your adult hands between your dog of any age and your baby.
- Teach your baby to pat-pat the dog nicely and gently with an open hand, on its side or back.