



NEW DOG OWNER TRAINING PROGRAM

KIDS AND DOGS

This information is intended as a general guide only

"The dog was created especially for children. He is the god of frolic."
-Henry Ward Beecher

Babies and children should never be left unsupervised with puppies and dogs

Learning to respect, understand, care for, and successfully control a dog gives a dramatic boost to any child's self-esteem. But these benefits do not come by magic. Children and parents alike must realize that cartoon dogs are fantasy, and Lassie was several well-trained dogs. In the domestic environment, both dogs and children must learn how to act around each other. All dogs must be taught how to act around children and all children must be taught how to act around dogs.



Teaching Dogs How to Act Around Children

To improve children's confidence and self-esteem, it is vital their puppy/dog training efforts succeed. Success depends upon adult planning, participation and direction. First, adults must teach the puppy or dog how to act in a controlled manner and second, adults must teach children how to control the puppy or dog. Adults should use treats to lure-reward train the puppy to 'come', 'sit', 'lie down', 'stand', and 'roll over'. These are the basic control commands; 'Stand' and 'Roll over' are the best commands for examining the dog's body.

Provide children with tasty treats (in addition to kibble) and instruct them how to lure-reward train the puppy. The puppy will quickly learn that training is fun and being trained by children is especially fun. Families without children at home must invite children to meet, handfeed and train the puppy during his first three months in his new home.

Young puppies are impressionable, cute, and non-threatening. Invite family, friends and neighbours with children (i.e. children the puppy is likely to meet as an adult). Instruct the children how to use kibble and treats to lure-reward train the puppy or dog to come, sit, lie down and roll over. By approaching and sitting close, the dog voluntarily accepts and enjoys the children's company. By sitting, lying down, and rolling over, the dog acknowledges and respects the child's requests. In other words, the child asks and the dog agrees. Or we could say, the child commands and the dog willingly complies. Moreover, by rolling over on request, the dog shows voluntary and happy appeasement.



Quite frankly, willing compliance and happy deference towards children is the only workable solution for pet dog training. Additionally, as a major beneficial side effect of lure-reward training, the dog grows to like and respect his trainer: "Wow! Children are fun; they give lots of treats!" All owners should seek family puppy training classes, in which puppies are allowed off-leash to socialise with children.

New Baby

Dogs can be taught to enjoy the presence and actions of babies; the solution is classical conditioning and preparing your dog for the arrival of a new baby in the house long before the baby actually arrives. The AWL Qld's Pregnant Paws Program includes an in-depth booklet on this subject, titled *Pregnant Paws: A guide to Keeping Companion Animals, Pregnant Mums and Babies Together and Safe in the Home*. For more information on the Pregnant Paws Program, or to obtain a copy of the booklet, call (07) 5509 9032 or email education@awlqld.com.au

Teaching Children how to Act Around Dogs

Teach your children how to teach a puppy or dog *before* you get a puppy or dog! Observe a puppy class so your children may learn training skills. Many class instructors will welcome children's participation, since socialising puppies with unfamiliar children is a major reason for puppy classes.

Additionally, observe an adolescent or adult dog class, so you can preview the predictable problems you are going to encounter (or better, prevent). Most importantly, make sure your children have ample opportunity to test-drive a variety of puppies and adult dogs. When selecting a puppy or dog, make sure all family members, especially the children, love the dog, feel completely at ease around the dog and are able to easily control the dog before you decide to welcome him into your home. Teach children to train and control the dog using training techniques they can master—classical conditioning, lure-reward, and reward-training techniques. By using brain instead of brawn, even three and four-year-olds can master these exercises.

Sit with your children, holding the food bowl and jointly handfeed the pup's first few meals. Instruct your child to occasionally offer treats (tastier than the dog's kibble) and your puppy will soon learn to love the presence of children.



Warn children never to approach any dog without supervision. Teach children how to train puppies to approach them. Instruct children to stand still, to always speak softly and to keep one hand in their pocket while luring and rewarding the dog with the other hand.

Any child who cannot get a puppy to come, sit and lie down, should never be allowed to play with that pup unsupervised. A single child (or adult, for that matter) with no control can ruin a good puppy within minutes. Insist on training before

playtime. And in no time, the child will be play-training the puppy. Children feel great because they can control puppies with verbal commands and hand signals. Puppies are ecstatic because they have discovered that sitting is the secret command that trains children to stand still and deliver treats on cue. Adult owners feel relieved and deservedly proud to know that their soon-to-be adolescent dogs are congenial and compliant with children.

For more information, please watch *Dog Training For Children, Every Picture Tells A Story*, and the *SIRIUS Puppy Training* DVDs and read *Raising Puppies & Kids Together*—all available on-line from www.amazon.com.

Read our Help Booklets 18: *Good Games; Bad Games* and 19: *How to Play with Your Dog*.

To locate puppy and dog classes in your area, contact New Owner Support Coordinator on 5509 9034 or email friendsforlife@awlqld.com.au