

## Dog-child interaction



### Child-dog safety

Over half of all dog bite victims are children and most child dog-bite victims are bitten by a dog known to them.

The imminent arrival of a baby into the family or a dog's behaviour around the family children are commonly given reasons when getting rid of a pet dog.

It is clear then that the area of children and dogs is one that must be paid close attention. Dog bite scenarios often have common ingredients so there are things we can do to prevent bites and keep dogs and children safe and happy.

It is possible to have dogs and kids living together successfully in most situations but care and understanding is essential.

Things we can do to keep dogs and kids safer:

- Supervise dogs and children at ALL times** – there are no exceptions to this rule.
- When supervision is not possible **management strategies** must be put in place – this may include separating the dog and child using a closed (and sometimes locked) door, crating your pet, leashing the pet, taking the dog out of the room with you for example.
- Parents, babysitters, dog sitters and dog owners must develop an understanding of doggie discomfort behaviour and signalling so that situations that are too much for the dog can be avoided.
- Advice regarding dog-child safety must be passed on to all adults who will care for the dog and/or the child.
- Dogs must be thoroughly socialized and training exercises implemented to prevent resource guarding and handling issues.
- Dogs should be desensitized to baby equipment, baby noises, baby smells and other child related stimuli – ideally this should take place before baby is born but will need to be worked on continuously.
- Its important that your dog has a safe child-free den of his own so he can escape from all the action.
- The presence of babies, children and all their bits and pieces should mean good things happen to your dog.