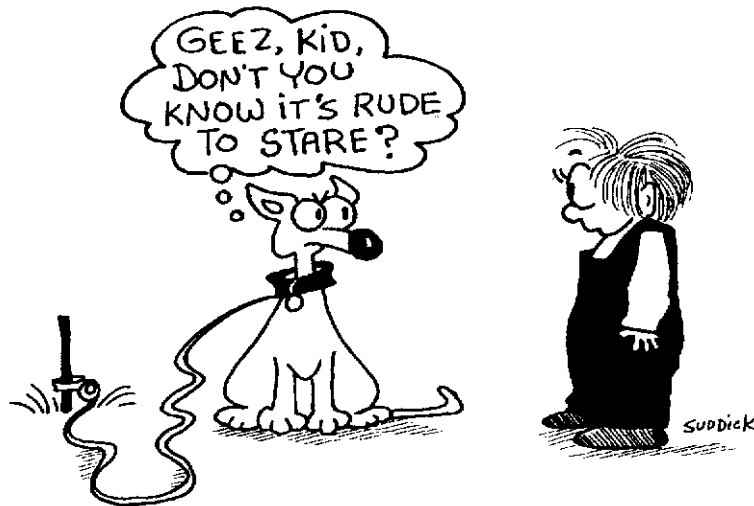


Dog-proof Your Kids



Dog bites are the number-one public health problem for children, eclipsing measles, mumps, and whooping cough combined. In fact, school-age children receive more than 47 percent of all reported dog bites. Two-thirds of these incidents happen around the child's home, and the child knows the dog.

Here are a few guidelines children should follow to protect themselves from dog bites.

- Treat dogs and other animals with respect. That includes never, ever provoking a dog into growling, barking, lunging, or otherwise acting aggressively.
- Don't chase dogs or encourage them to chase you.
- Avoid strange dogs. Never go onto someone else's property or approach a strange animal to pet him. Since some dogs will bite when they are afraid, they might bite to protect themselves or their territory.
- Ask before petting a neighbor's dog—even if you know the dog well. The dog could have a sore ear that morning and your gentle pat on that exact spot could cause the dog to bite you.
- Don't run and scream around dogs. Quick movements and high-pitched squeals can frighten a dog—and frightened dogs can bite.
- Respect a dog's privacy. Never bother a dog when he's eating or in his crate, special room, or special spot in the house or yard.
- Don't stare at a dog. To dogs, staring is perceived as a threat, and they can react aggressively towards you.



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