

Preventing Dog Bites in Children

How to Avoid Dog Bites in Children



By: Ed Frawley



Leerburg Kennels

Foreword

When you view this eBook in PDF format. Click on **BOOKMARKS** on the top left side of your PDF reader, these bookmarks are eBook chapters.

[Leerburg Kennel](#) and Video is owned by Ed Frawley.

Ed has owned German Shepherds (GSD) for over 45 years. Since 1978 he has bred over 350 litters of German working bloodline GSDs. His dogs work in law enforcement, as S&R dogs, as competition Schutzhund dogs, and as family companions and protectors.

Since 1980 Ed has produced over 120 dog training videos and DVD's. He was a police K-9 handler for 10 years, competed in several dog sports, including AKC obedience and Schutzhund. In addition he has built one of the top dog training supply businesses in the world.

If you go to the web site **Leerburg.com**® you will see that it has over 10,000 printed pages. The Leerburg Web Discussion board has over 10,000 registered members and over 120,000 posts in the archives. Learn to use our site search function.

Other article on preventing dog bites on Children:

[Introducing Dogs to New Born Babies](#)

[Emails from People Who's Dogs Have Attacked Children](#)

How to Avoid Dog Bites in Children

According to a 1994 study by Mathews and Lattal approximately one million dog bites occur every year in the United States – according to the study 60-70% of those involve children, boys are bitten more often than girls and a third of the dogs that attack children are owned by the family.

A study by Beck done in 1975 indicated that 87% of biting dogs are intact males and most dogs bites occur in or near the victim's home. Another study by Sacks in 1989 indicated that 70% of the children that were killed by dogs were under the age of 10 and 22 % were under the age of one year with 7% being sleeping infants.



A young boy after a dog attack.

HINTS for PARENTS to TEACH YOUR CHILD Concerning Dogs

1. NEVER disturb any dog who is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
2. NEVER pet a dog, even your own, without letting him see and sniff you first.
3. Children must always ASK PERMISSION from the owner and their parents BEFORE petting any dog. I never allowed my children near strange dogs much less pet them.
4. If the owner cannot control the dog and have it SIT nicely for the child to pet, WALK AWAY.
5. NEVER approach a dog who is confined behind a fence, within a car, or on a chain.
6. NEVER TEASE any dog by poking at them through fences or car windows or reaching your arm through to pet them.
7. NEVER approach a strange dog you don't know or a dog who is not with his owner.
8. NEVER RUN away from a dog that is chasing you. STOP, STAND STILL,

REMAIN CALM, ARMS AT YOUR SIDES, be quiet and DO NOT SCREAM. Walk away SLOWLY FACING THE DOG BUT NOT STARING AT its eyes.

9. If a dog attacks, “feed” him your jacket, a school book, a bicycle, or anything else that you can get between you and the dog.

10. If you are attacked, STOP, CURL UP IN A BALL LIKE A TURTLE, COVER YOUR HEAD WITH YOUR ARMS AND HANDS.

If you own any dog, but especially a dog that has had the smallest amount of aggression or protection training it is your moral and legal obligation to make sure that you do everything possible to insure that your dog is never in a situation where it could bite a child.

The Humane Society estimates that there are 800,000 dog bites that require medical attention every year. Dog bites rank second behind sexually transmitted diseases as the most costly health problem in the country. Over 60% of those bitten are children and 80% of the fatalities are children.

I am not going to go into the reasons people train dogs to bite. But if you want to have your eyes opened I suggest that you buy the book we sell titled [FATAL DOG ATTACKS - The Stories Behind the Statistics](#), This book will shock you. When you start to read it you cannot put it down. The STUPIDITY of how people handle their dogs will shock you.

I am the first to admit that problems exist when inexperienced people attempt to protection train a dog with inappropriate temperament. Many often follow this training with inadequate and irresponsible handling or housing. The fact is that most dog bites occur from dogs that have had little to no training, they simply have poor temperament. They are either sharp, dominant or territorial animals.

A perfect example occurred in Kansas a few years ago when [Sabine Davidson allowed her Rotts to kill an 11 year old neighbor boy](#). This case was an example of one mistake compounded upon another.

- Ms. Davidson had attempted protection training her 4 Rotts.
- She had tried to join several Schutzhund clubs and had been kicked out of all of them.
- She had purchased several training videos from me.
- The dog had an inappropriate temperament. When I testified against her in court, I saw video of one of these dogs. It had weak nerves and was a sharp dog.
- From all indications the male pack leader was a dominant dog.
- The dogs were allowed to live together in the back yard and were not kept in separate kennels. (This elevated their pack drive.)

- The gate to the back yard was in poor repair. The dogs had gotten out of the yard numerous times and roamed the neighborhood chasing children into their homes. As a result of this, the dogs had established a large area that they considered "THEIR TERRITORY!"
- The police had warned them on numerous occasions to fix the gate and keep the dogs in.
- The Davidson's had not made any attempt to repair the gate.
- The dogs were allowed to run the fence and bark aggressively at neighborhood children who would be playing across the street (The Rotts considered this their territory and the children were looked at as prey or competition to that territory).

I am proud of the fact that I testified (free of charge) for 1 1/2 hours at the Davidson trial and helped put her in prison for 12 years. The DA sent me a letter that he would not have gotten a conviction without my testimony. I would do it again in a similar case.

This article deals with things that can be done to help eliminate child bites in dogs. It's too late for the young boy in the Davidson case (and I am not sure that the things I am about to talk about would have saved his life; we will never know.) But there are things that other children can do to lessen their chances of getting bit by strange dogs or even their own dogs.

Dogs and Babies - Preventing Dogs Attacking Babies:

I get a lot of emails from people who own dogs and are about to have a baby. These people want to make sure they don't have an issue with their dog attacking a baby.

There is a protocol for dealing with dogs and newborn babies. It starts with NEVER allowing ANY dog to be unattended around your baby. Not even for 5 seconds. In addition the dog is NEVER allowed in the baby's room. NOT EVER! If you don't own a dog crate it's time to buy one.

When parents bring a new born baby home from the hospital they should NOT ALLOW the dog to come and smell the baby or lick the baby. In fact the dog needs to be trained to stay away from the baby.

Your goal is to teach the dog that the baby is YOUR BABY and NOTHING to do with the dog. The baby should not to be smelled, touched. The dog needs to learn that the baby is a higher ranking member of the family pack and that you (as the pack leader) enforce the babies rank. This is no different than a mother wolf who does not allow other pack members near their new born pups.

The way to set this training up is to take items that have the babies smell on them; baby cloths, baby sheets, dirty diapers etc. Lay them in your living area where the dog is allowed to be.

The dog is NEVER to be allowed to go near these items. They can't play with them, they even go over

and smell them, and they can't go near them. The dog needs to learn that there is a bubble around the smell of a baby that they are not allowed to enter.

If they do go to smell them they are corrected. Don't kid yourself that the dog can smell these items from across the room and that's as close as they are allowed.

When you set up this training the dog should already be on a longer line - one of our [20 foot cotton lines](#) that is cut down will work or you can make one. We also sell very nice [leather drag lines](#) that are meant for this work. They are 5 feet long.

Leather Drag Leash



Light weight drag leash with no handle. Hand made from latigo leather with a bronze snap.

If the dog walks over to smell the diaper he gets a verbal NO. If he does not turn and immediately (instantly) leave he gets a serious level 5 correction. If he ignores that correction you immediately correct to level 8 or 9. The goal is to teach the dog that the smell of the baby is OUT OF BOUNDS!!

To learn and understand corrections, read the article I wrote titled [THE THEORY OF CORRECTIONS IN DOG TRAINING.](#)

NEVER leave these baby items lying around when you are out of the room. Treat them just like you treat your baby. The dog and these items are never together - not for a long, long time. Look at it like this. If you can't control the dog staying away from these articles of clothing then you can't control the dog staying away from your baby.

Some DANGEROUS INSANE PHOTOS

The following series of photos demonstrate as dangerous of a situation as I could imagine. The owners have allowed this Mastiff to be off leash near this baby.



**This dog is showing his dominance over this child.
If the slightest thing went wrong here the dog
could or would attack the child**



Again this dog is showing his dominance over this child. The parents are very lucky if this dog does not attack the baby.



Again - the dog is demonstrating signs of dominance over the child. It is INSANE TO ALLOW A DOG TO DO THIS TO A BABY.

Walking the Dog and Baby at the Same Time

You have a second opportunity to demonstrate PACK STRUCTURE when the time comes for you to take the baby and the dog for a walk. The dog must be on leash with a training collar.

There are only 4 kinds of training collars: a flat collar, a [prong collar](#), a [dominant dog collar](#) and a [remote collar](#) - which one you use depends on the dog's temperament and training level. Frankly for this I would be using a prong or a remote collar. My two DVD's teach you how to do the foundation training.



When you walk the dog it is NEVER allowed to walk in front of the baby stroller. It must ALWAYS stay behind it. This is a huge thing for a dog. It genetically understands that higher ranking pack members go through doors first, go through gaits first, go down stairs first and LEAD ON WALKS.

If you take your dog for a walk (without the baby)

and it pulls you down the street you need to solve that problem before you take the baby with you. The golden rule of dog training is **ONLY TRAIN ONE THING AT A TIME.**

So if you already have issues with a pulling dog you and your dog need training. You should get my 4 hour DVD titled [Basic Dog Obedience](#) and/or my 3 1/2 hr DVD titled [Remote Collar Training for the Pet Owner](#).

**Establishing Pack Structure
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Older Children Need Training Too

Children should be taught to never approach a strange dog without asking permission from the owner, even if the dog looks like it's friendly. This is something the parents of children need to be aware of.

It absolutely amazes me how often I have people visit my kennel with children who are allowed to run up to a new dog when I bring it out (many times after being told not to.)

Children should be told to report seeing any loose dogs roaming in their neighborhood. This can give the parents the opportunity to contact the owners and warn them of the potential for danger (which many pet owners denies even exist)"Old Spot would never consider biting a child!" WRONG ANSWER!!!

The first approach with these people needs to be reverse psychology. It eliminates initial hostility. You go to them and act concerned for the dog. You do not want to see their dog get run over. You realize that they were out cutting the grass in the back yard and the dog was only out of their sight for 20 seconds but it crossed the road into your yard and it could easily have been hit by a car. If they had an in-ground wire fence ([like the Innotek Fences that we sell](#)) the dog would never leave their yard.

The second time it happens it should be explained that you are concerned for your children.

Tell them they either contain their dog 100% of the time or you will contact animal control. The third time, if it were possible, I would spray the dog with pepper gas and call animal control. Chasing the dog out of your yard is an excellent way to let the dog know that your yard is not part of his territory. Dogs inherently understand this.

Just explain to the animal control officer that you feared for the safety of your children.

Continue to call the police every time the dog was seen running loose. I would also start a file on the dog. Insist on knowing the police incident number every time you call. Keep these on file. As terrible as this may sound, you may need this as evidence some day.

If the officer will not give you the incident number, call his supervisor and explain your concerns. If it does not work, go over his head too. Sooner or later you are going to get someone's attention. The street cop may not want to write a report so he will not put an incident. This means that as far as the police are concerned this never happened.

What to do Around an AGGRESSIVE DOG

If a dog growls or acts aggressive towards you or your children, do not scream or turn and run. This can trigger the dogs "[PREY DRIVE](#)". When that happens the dog is going to chase you down and often bite. This very same dog may have ignored the person or child had they stood still. Many times the most the dog would have done was sniff the child and leave.



A young boy after a dog attack.

The best advice is to slowly turn sideways to the dog and divert your eyes from his (DO NOT STARE AT THE DOG.) Stand quietly and keep the arms down by your side. Dogs do not naturally give direct eye contact for any length of time. The only time they get or give eye contact is just before they attack, or just before they flee. So if you have a dominant dog getting direct eye contact from a child, the dog interprets the eye contact as prey that is about to run. That may be enough to trigger an attack.

Children may instinctively want to quickly raise their arms so they will not get bit. Quickly raising the arms can also trigger prey drive. It also exposes the chest area to a bite. A chest or upper back bite can be much more serious than an arm bite. Many people think that you need to turn and run to trigger prey. This is not so. Any quick movement (no matter how small) can trigger a dog's prey drive. If a dog has only been partially trained in protection work, a quick move of the arms will trigger prey.

If the dog does just sniff the child and walk away, the child should remain stationary for a few seconds and

then gradually back away from the dog. They should not turn their back and walk (or run) away.

What to do in a DOG ATTACK

In the worst case scenario the dog will charge in for a bite. If this happens, the child should fall to the ground and curl up in a fetal position with their arms over their head. The dog is going to read this as a submissive posture. He may not even bite at that point. He may accept the submission and after standing over the child for a few seconds walk away.

Now here is the really difficult part for parents. Should you look outside when the kids are screaming and see a strange dog standing over the top of a child on the ground. You do not want to run out screaming your head off. This may also trigger an attack.

This has been proven again and again when 2 strange dogs are checking each other out and the owner over reacts and charges the scene screaming. The owner's actions actually trigger the attack. As long as the dog is not biting the child, remain calm. Get a weapon or something (pepper gas, a garbage can or a garbage can lid) to keep between you and the dog. In my opinion the best scenario would be to shoot the dog. That's not really an option because the child is so close. Probably the safest is to take pepper gas and the lid of a garbage can (to use as a shield) and slowly walk up to the dog. Without saying anything, spray him in the nose and eyes. When the dog leaves, you will need to take the child into the shower and wash the gas out of his eyes and nose (it's going to hurt.)

God forbid that dog should attack a child on the ground. The best defense is still to remain tucked up in a ball. Many times a dog will take one nip and leave. As alarming as this sounds, and as horrible as it may seem, this action is going to cause less damage than being dragged down as the child tries to run away. In addition, the dog's prey drive will be elevated to a higher level by a fleeing child than one who drops to the ground and acts submissive. Dropping to the ground and acting submissive may be enough to satisfy a dominant dog that just wants to show his superiority over this child. If you want to learn more about dominant dogs, read my article titled [DEALING WITH THE DOMINANT DOG](#).

It's a misconception that parents only need to worry about the big Rottweiler or German Shepherd next door. I have seen some very, very nasty small dogs. I have been doing helper work and training dogs in protection work for 20 years and my worst dog bite came from my mother's toy poodle. It only bit me once.



A shocking view for a parent

Eliminating Dog Bite Through Training

Eliminating dog bites begins with responsible pet ownership. It's the owner's responsibility to make sure that his dog is properly obedience trained and properly contained. Obedience training is the first step at reducing dominance levels in all dogs. Obedience training is not the only solution to eliminating aggression but it is an intrigue part. I always recommend people get my 4 hour DVD titled [Basic Dog Obedience along](#) with a training collar. That means a [prong collar](#), a [dominant dog collar](#) or a [remote collar](#).

Dogs must be submissive to a human when they are obedience trained. So [obedience training](#) is vital. If you see your dog giving direct eye contact as it aggressively growls when you or your children try and take a toy away, it's time to become proactive. You need to deal with this dominance issue or get rid of the dog. I produced a 3 hr 35 min DVD titled [Dealing with Dominant and Aggressive dogs](#) If your dog is aggressive you need this DVD.

If you have no interest in personal protection or breeding you should neuter your dog at a young age (before it's a year old).

Statistics show that un-neutered dogs are 3 times more likely to bite than neutered dogs. Although, this is not something that is set in stone. If a dog is neutered at a young age (6 to 10 months) it will often reduce aggression. But if a dog is neutered after 2 years of age it often has little effect on aggression.

In fact neutering an adult female can often increase aggression.

If a dog is a sharp dog by nature, the owner must take additional precautions on this dog's containment system. It needs to be in a very secure and escape proof living environment (i.e. a dog kennel or crate that he can not get out of).

If you see your dog charging up and down the fence line in your back yard barking aggressively at the kids across the street or next door, then you have a potential problem. Do not look at this situation as a case of the kids teasing the dog. In most cases it's the dog becoming territorial and challenging the kids.

On the same note, there is a difference between an aggressive bark and a dog that barks because it wants to get out and play. If you do not know the difference between the two scenarios, I recommend that you talk to your vet or possibly get my video titled, [THE FIRST STEPS OF DEFENSE](#). I will say it one more time; handler education is the root of all these problems.

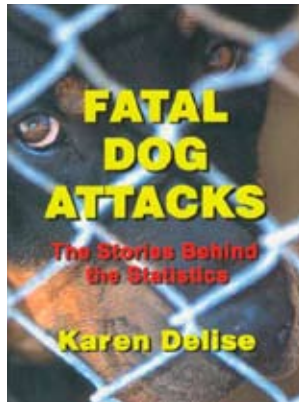
Some people think chaining a dog is the solution; after all, how can a dog get off a chain? They are 100% wrong. While it's OK to chain a dog out for an hour or so (we do this here at our kennel), it is not OK to make a dog live on the end of a chain. Chaining a dog makes matters worse. Dogs that live their lives on a chain become almost schizophrenics. It's a cruel way to keep a dog and it usually makes them more aggressive.



One week after an attack

Even though I sell training videos to teach people how to train police service dogs, personal protection dog's, and sport dogs, I would not hesitate to testify against someone who blatantly ignores sound, safe dog handling.

I am proud of the fact that Sabine Davidson is spending the next 12 years of her life in a Kansas prison. My personal feeling is that it should have been a longer sentence. This woman displayed no remorse. **She blamed the child for the attack.** There is no excuse for stupidity.



[A Great Book to learn from the Mistakes of others](#)

E-mails

QUESTION on DOG BITES:

Hello,

I am hoping you can help me. I came across your web site and thought maybe you could supply me with some information.

This last weekend I went to visit my brother-in-law out of state to see his new baby boy. This is the problem: He has got three Siberian Huskies that he has gotten from Husky Rescue. His first two are very good temperament wise. However, the third one has been very different. He did not receive any socialization when he was young.

He seems to be more of a wild animal. While I was there I witnessed this dog being aggressive to the baby. The baby was sleeping in a swing and when he started to stir and whine a bit, this dog walked up to him, opened his mouth and was going to pick this baby up by his head.

I screamed and yelled and his father came and took the dog outside, only to let him back in later. We told him he needed to get rid of this dog and he said, "NO ONE WILL TAKE THIS DOG BECAUSE OF ALL OF HIS ISSUES". His wife became totally upset with the thought of getting rid of this dog. They feel they can protect the baby from the dog. I do not agree. I almost think that the dog when hearing the baby cry thinks of it as prey. Please give me any feedback soon. Is this dog a danger or will a behaviorist help?

Thanks,
Cheryl A. Petersen

ANSWER on DOG BITES:

You are 100% correct. This dog thinks this baby is prey. Dogs often do not look at small babies as human – but rather as other animals. You saved this baby's life.

Read the article I wrote on [PREVENTING DOG BITES IN BABIES](#). You can find this on the article page on my web site. That's where this article will be posted.

Your brother and his wife are very foolish people. I hope their stubbornness and stupidity do not result in the death of their baby.

TESTIMONIAL on DOG BITES:

December 7, 1998

I just read your article on "Kid Bites" and feel the need to thank you for your dedication towards public safety. With a trend in the USA toward ownership of "tougher" dogs, I feel the community needs further education (on the part of the dog owner, as well as potential victims.) Furthermore, with so much unsupervised "backyard" protection training, more and more people seem to be pushing their dogs toward the "Cujo" end of the spectrum, without taking the additional responsibility of protection dog ownership. Further, I find it commendable that you seem to be one of the few people in the business of protection training that will be the first to admit to

the merits of having a dog that simply barks at the door.

While I feel the “Kid Bite” article addressed many common issues toward public safety, I wish you would give me your opinion/advice on a more specific problem. This scenario involves a law-abiding dog owner, out in the neighborhood walking his LEASHED dog--when a large dog, displaying the typical signs of aggression, charged at the law-abiding citizen w/leashed dog.

When I was in high school, I experienced a similar situation with two GSD's charging at me, but luckily I had a surfboard tucked under my arm. My initial response was to hold still, as I had been advised to do so by a local K-9 officer. However, as the dogs got closer and closer, still charging, I went into “autopilot.” I turned my surfboard as a shield, aimed the nose towards the dogs, and ran at them while giving them a primal scream. In an instant, they turned tail and ran home, while I continued to chase them. A few seconds later, I seemed to regain control over my system, and I asked myself “What the Hell am I doing?” At that point, I turned and walked away, carefully looking over my shoulder with every step.

Years later, while I was walking my LEASHED dog, I found myself, once again, the subject of a charge, and again, I went into “autopilot.” This time, instead of a surfboard, I had a large umbrella. As the dog neared, I opened the umbrella--and he turned and ran. In truth, I didn't expect this result, but rather I was hoping to use it more as a shield, partly to keep my dog and the other dog from holding eye contact, and partly be able to put something (other

than myself) between two dogs who may well have gotten into a fight.

That said, do you think it's wise to freeze while walking a leashed dog, and allow the possibility of a dogfight or even an attack on a person? From my personal experience, I feel the umbrella is an effective shield, and if need be, a weapon, but honestly, my hunch is that 99% of the dogs out there will turn and run from an opened umbrella. It seems to fit with the universal "make big" threat found within the animal kingdom.

Thank you once again,
B Marn

Question on DOG BITES:

I got my dog when he was over a year old--he was a stray of mixed breed, but I believe he has Irish Terrier blood. I had him neutered. I have had him for almost 6 years. He is usually a mild-mannered dog and has always gotten along with other dogs, and most people. He used to bark at a neighbor but with scolding he stopped.

For the past two years I have become more acquainted with small children (previously I was rarely around them and consequently neither was Tramp,) and it was immediately obvious that my dog is afraid of small children. When children approach him (which I have discouraged) he runs away. I have been successful for the past two years at maintaining safety with little children by keeping control of the situation, petting Tramp and allowing the children to pet him with cautious supervision.

Recently we have had some major life changes: I now have a two month old daughter and we have bought our first house. Tramp is fine with my daughter, even licking her forehead when he sees her. But his problem is not with infants, it is with toddlers. In the last two weeks this problem has manifested itself tenfold.

First, he bit my nephew on the cheek, who was growling at him. Second, he bit a friend's daughter (again on the cheek) who outran her father into the dog's room. Obviously I am to blame for this, since I knew the dog was nervous around little children. In the first incident both child and dog were outside with my brother while I was inside taking care of my daughter. The second incident occurred yesterday, my first day back at work since giving birth. Neither bite required stitches but both broke the skin. I am at a loss for what to do--my mother and uncle (who gave me the dog) say I should put him down--and their reasoning is sound--a child is more important than a dog. And I agree. Yet for six years all was OK--I feel he might be OK with someone who does not have children and knows that he is a potential danger is that person has children visit. I don't think he will outgrow this fear--and as a new, stressed mother I fear I will not be able to exercise the control have been. Trying to find someone to adopt him sounds ideal to me, but I can't help but think that if he should bite someone in the future and I would be the one who made the decision to allow him to do it? Your advice is appreciated.

Thank you,
Samantha

Answer on DOG BITES:

A dog like this should NEVER be allowed around children. It should be crated whenever children are in the area. There is NO SITUATION that the dog should be allowed near a child. This includes you standing there. You do not have enough control over the dog to allow it near a child. Dog like this can be kept but it needs to be with responsible pet owners who make an effort to train the dog and understand the dogs limitations.

The dog needs to be obedience trained and controlled. It needs to be kept away from children. Find it a good home.

QUESTION on DOG BITES:

Our Rottweiler puppy is 4 months old now and I am taking the selection, training and care of this new member of the family very seriously ...especially since we have two small children (12 month old and 3 1/2 yrs old). I am at home all day so have plenty of time to care for and train our puppy but with such a big and strong dog I want to make sure to do it right. I am going to order a few of your videos to help me know the how-to's of training. Friends and family have asked "aren't you concerned about having a Rottweiler and small children?" I know Rotts can be very good family dogs and safe around the children if trained right. I never leave our puppy and children together unsupervised. I also have that question in the back of my mind "what if she did bite one of my kids, what if she wouldn't let go"... what could I do in that situation if it did ever occur. We learn CPR etc. just in case. I need to know what to do just in case

our Rott did try to hurt a child or an adult. Any advice would be extremely appreciated for safety and for peace of mind.

ANSWER on DOG BITES:

You are ahead of yourself. You should be spending your time to do the proper work to establish yourself as pack leader. If this happens now it will carry over for the rest of your dog's life. This does not mean beat your dog up. It means do the things I discuss in my article on [dealing with a dominant dog](#); it also means running the dog through [Basic Dog Obedience](#). Get a prong collar and begin to work this dog in obedience. This work should never stop - always work exercises with the dog - make it fun for the dog by doing what I say in the tape but make sure to follow it up (as the dog grows) with a solid correction. Plus continue to read my articles and Q&A on my web site.

QUESTION on DOG BITES:

I have been looking through your site for info. My problem is this; my 9 yr old son is aggressive toward our 9 month old shepherd-bull terrier mix. The dog is not aggressive but I am afraid that he will become aggressive if my son doesn't quit wrestling the dog to the ground every chance he gets. Other than his color, our dog looks shepherd in body, face, eyes, hair, build and size. We are even waiting for his left ear to come up. He is neutered and seems to have a beautiful temperament. Our dog barks but is easily stopped with a strong, not loud, "no". He shares his food bowl with the cats, he even lets them stand

under his head and chest and eat at the same time. He doesn't make a lot of eye contact (unless he wants something) and was successfully taught that he can't nip the kids during play. When disciplined for something like getting into trash etc. he does take a submissive posture and will inch toward us looking for forgiveness and is easily perked up with a pat and affectionate words. In my opinion he is a good, eager to please dog but we have noticed that the dog has begun to growl and nip (without actual tooth to skin contact) at our son when wrestled with (to be honest, I would do more than that if I were the dog). My son has the mind set that a dog is for "playing" with in the way boys like to play. I have shown him the bite pics you have on your site and hope that I can control his behavior with the dog. I have explained to the boy how the dog is beginning to see him as a threat... or possibly something that needs to be dominated and put in place. All five of us (me, hubby, two teen girls and the 9 yr old boy) are involved in his care and crate training. The boy is the only person in our home that the dog has deemed necessary to warn. We use vocal command and we socialize the dog every chance we get. We love our dog, we love our son. What do we do?

Is there something we can do to teach the boy... or are we asking for a bite. I am reluctantly willing to find a new home for the dog. What is your opinion?

Heather in Denver

ANSWER ON DOG BITES:

From the sound of everything that you say, you have a very nice dog, but a child that needs training.

I question if showing him photos of dog bites will change the way he treats his dog. I doubt it.

Parents have a responsibility to control their children around animals. Some children need to learn better manners. This should come from the parent and too often it comes from an abused animal and when that happens the animal usually loses (it ends up being put to sleep or put in a different home). If this were my son I would sit down and explain the reasons for how I expect the boy to act around his dog. I would also explain the consequences of breaking the rules. The very first time I saw him getting too rough with the dog would result in lost privileges. If the penalty is severe enough he will listen. It may be that your son simply has not learned any other way to play with his dog. Teach him to play with a Frisbee. Teach him to play "2 ball" (you can read about this on my web site). Maybe your son just needs to have his energy redirected into a more positive direction.

RESPONSE DOG BITES:

Thank you... It never occurred to me that the boy needed to be taught specific games...we always just tell him to "play nice" We do intervene when the boy gets rowdy and a lot of times we separate the two. Maybe this will work for how he plays with his sisters too Ha Ha :-). I will look for "2 ball" on your site.

We have had the discussion twice... and punishments have been outlined. I hope this works.

QUESTION on DOG BITES:

We have an 18 month old mixed breed dog that we

“saved” at about 6-8 weeks of age. We believe he has some Australian Shepherd in him and Brittany Spaniel. He was a very happy and friendly puppy and didn't show any signs of aggression until around 6 months of age, when he started barking at everything. He has bitten my mother in-law on the back of her leg when she walked past his food. He did not break the skin just bruised it pretty bad. He was about one year old then. We tried to keep everyone away from his food. Three months later after my son and his friend took him for a bike ride (he runs along side of my son's bike with his lease on the handle bar). They came in the house and my son was taking too much time to get him some water. He was standing there wagging his tail and when the neighbor moved closer to my son the dog grabbed the boy's arm with his mouth. When the boy naturally reacted and pulled his arm away he was left with a scratch. The next day it was bruised. No blood was shed. We took him to training and he listens much better to my husband and myself. And when on the leash with the pinch (prong) collar he does pretty good. But he still barks at anything when he is in the back yard or if someone approaches the house while he is in his crate. When they come in he usually barks and then calms down. We take him out on the leash and when we know that he understands there is nothing to fear we let him off the leash, if it is an adult. With children I leave him in the crate. The other day my husband told my son to take the dog for a walk, a little girl who the dog knows approached on her bike. My son told her to not come near the dog. She didn't listen and the dog got her on the back of the leg and pulled off her sock and shoe. My son

didn't realize he had bitten her until she told him at school the next day. He said she had a small bruise on her leg, again no blood. We know the best thing to do is probably to put him to sleep. But that is very hard for us and he is fine with our own family and most visitors as long as we wait 'til he calms down etc. Our children love him very much and we are afraid putting him to sleep will have a negative effect on them maybe permanently. The vet gave us medication after the incident with the boy. But when we took him to training the trainer thought he didn't need it. So, now we have started to give him the medication and my husband also understands he has to be tough. But I am still afraid that putting him down would be best and get a well breed dog later on. I would really appreciate any insight you may have on our situation.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Menold Weaver

ANSWER DOG BITES:

There are several issues here:

- 1- Neuter this dog.
- 2- Get a good muzzle and make the dog wear it until he is 110% trained. You can find this on our web site in the [list of training equipment](#).
- 3- It is not trained. Listening sometimes does not constitute a trained dog. If you would like to learn something about the principles of obedience training a dog, read the description for my [Basic Dog Obedience video](#). You will probably find that you have not had the full picture on the steps of training

a dog must go through before it can be considered fully trained. You can also read why I am not a fan of taking an untrained dog to obedience classes.

4- You do not fit the category of a responsible pet owner. You may not like to hear this but it happens to be true. You have a dog that has already proven that it will bite and you allow your son to walk this dog. You don't properly train the dog. You allow strange children to be around the dog (when you know it bites)

5- It is not an excuse for you to say that you did not know what was going on when your son had the dog - you are the parent here. If you expected a sympathetic response from me you came to the wrong place. Children get bit because owners of dogs (like the one you have) do not take the appropriate steps to train and care for their animals.

The answer to the question of putting the dog to sleep is not one I can to answer. With proper training and care the dog should be able to be safe around people. You and your family have not demonstrated the ability to do that yet - so that option still needs to be considered.

QUESTION DOG BITES:

O.k., I'll try to make this as short as possible but I have to explain my situation. I need help and have been searching sites on dogs and aggressive behavior. I have a 5 year old German Shepherd (Rex) that weighs approx. 130 - 140 pounds. He is a good dog, very protective and very territorial. I have never had

problems with taking Rex outside of his fenced area and into my open yard with me. He occasionally has run onto the road with curiosity to check out people walking by, we live in a very small country town in PA. Within the last year, he attacked a neighbor's dog that has more than once broken loose and entered my property, tormenting my dog who lives inside a fenced area. I was in the yard with Rex and this dog was once again loose and entering my property. Rex ran and grabbed this other dog, he had the other dog by the hind quarters and obviously wanted to hurt him. My boyfriend grabbed him by the collar and was able to pull him loose and return him to the safety of his fence. Amazingly, the other dog did not appear injured, so we took him home and secured him to the harness that he had slipped out of. His owners were not home at the time and I later found out had left him for the weekend.

Next story happened this past week. We were in the yard doing yard work and I saw Rex take a pose as if to spot movement on the road, I saw it too through the hedges. Rex started to run for the road and I gave the command to stop, he did not stop. It was a neighbor that often jogs the road pushing a 3 wheeled stroller. Rex went around the woman and to the front of the stroller, inside was her 2 year old daughter. I saw the mother bend down to shove the dog away, I was already steps behind the dog at this point. Rex was not growling, barking or showing an aggressive attack. When I got to him, I slammed into his back end with my knees and told him to move. He went around the far side of the stroller, my boyfriend grabbed him and put him back inside the fence.

At this point, the little girl was screaming and the mother was panicked. The little girl had approx. a 1/2 inch laceration in her hair line on the left side behind her temple. She was taken to the hospital, received a few stitches and also 2 stitches in the crease of her left eyelid. The eyelid was not punctured, more like grazed but they put stitches there anyhow (not sure why). The little girl is fine, thank God. These people are wonderful people and I have known the father all of my life, we were all sick about the whole situation. He told me that he will not sue me, he has known my whole family too long and knows that we are good people and he won't do that. (I am lucky) The Dog Warden came and Rex has been quarantined to the garage for 10 days. He has all of his shots but this precaution has to be taken and I understand that. The quarantine is over this Monday, June 14th. I was just advised by the Warden that they are pressing the Dangerous Dog Act on Rex. I haven't received the paperwork yet but from my understanding and the reading that I have been doing, this means that anytime the dog is out, he must be muzzled and on a leash. He also must be maintained in a safe, secure area. My question is, what are the guidelines on a safe secure area? We were planning to put up a new, stronger fence (although the one that he has lived in for his 5 years of life, he has not and does not escape from). Anything that I've read so far says that it has to have a roof and cement 1 to 2 feet into the ground. I have not read anything that specifies the size of the containment. This is a large dog that needs to run for exercise, he cannot spend his life in a small cage and cannot get the exercise that he needs on a leash. I am thrilled that he is able to live, I love this dog with

all of my heart. He was given to me by my father 6 months before he passed away. He is not a vicious dog and I cannot for the life of me figure out what provoked this incident. There was at one a boy on a bicycle that I found out was teasing him occasionally, could this have triggered something when he saw the child inside the stroller with wheels? I'm not trying to defend what he did, it was wrong but if it had been a vicious attack and he had wanted this child, he would have had her and / or he would have gone after the mother when she tried to shove him away (in my opinion). The mother said that the little girl had her arms up and was saying: doggie doggie doggie. Maybe she tried to grab and hug him the way small children do and it startled him. I also have a theory that when the mother shoved at him, she forced his head down and his tooth then cut the girls head.

This dog would defend my family with his life, I owe it to him to fight for his. Is there anything that I can do to deter this behavior at his age? I realize the risk I take to keep him alive but he does not deserve to die. Is there someone or an organization out there that can help with the training of this dog? Is there someone out there that would take him if I could no longer keep him in order to save his life?

I also have the issue of insurance to deal with now. The insurance companies are silently eliminating any and all liability risks from insurance policies and / or dropping insurance. They want all of our money but they don't want to have to pay it back for any reason.

He is extremely smart, his father was the same size and I was informed that his grand-father lives in Germany. I am assuming that his bloodline is German but I have no way of knowing as I don't have papers for him and don't know how to reach the people that he came from. He was a gift to my father to give to me. Any advice or suggestions you could offer would be appreciated.

Too bad we don't have all these crooked attorneys out there fighting for the animal's best interest like they fight for people and their ridiculous lawsuits!!

Thank you for your time and I'm looking forward to hearing from you,

Judy Lentz
Pittsburgh, PA

ANSWER DOG BITES Kid:

No one wants to be told they are a poor pet owner and have caused the problems that their dog has – but the fact is this is the case. It may be hard to swallow but it's the truth.

I need to point out a few things here:

- 1- This warden did the right thing. You own a dangerous untrained dog with a faulty temperament.
- 2- This dog is not trained. If it were you would have been able to call him back when he took off. You could not do that – this is an owner mistake and not a dog mistake.
- 3- The dog has poor temperament. The fact that the

little girl had her arms up or possibly even grabbed the dog is by no means an excuse for a dog to bite a child. This has absolutely nothing to do with a dog protecting himself – it's an example of a dog with bad temperament.

4- Insurance companies expect responsible dog ownership – allowing a dog like this to be loose in the yard does not reflect responsibility – under certain conditions you knew the dog would take off (i.e. a stray dog). You should not have had the dog loose unless it was 110% trained to a recall under every condition. This means it should have been on a long line, tied up or with an electric collar to reinforce a command.

5- You need to direct your question on a secure enclosure to your animal warden – he is the person that will enforce the ordinance. I would assume this means a fenced area that the dog cannot get out of. If you train this dog – it requires an electric collar so it is under your control 110% you can exercise it in the country. If you cannot do these things then find a new home for the dog or put it to sleep.

6- Frankly the fact that this dog went around the mother and bit the child indicates a serious head problem with this dog. I would put it to sleep. In my opinion this dog is beyond the skill level of you as a trainer and owner.

QUESTION DOG BITES Kid:

I am very concerned that I did not do everything that I could to avoid the situation that occurred the other night with our two year old daughter.

Maybe you can give us your point of view. We have had Snowball for 4 ½ years. I took him to obedience training when he was one year old just to make sure we were keeping him in check to be a house dog living with my husband and our two children 2 and 4 years old. The first sign of aggression came when he bit me in the face when he was about 4 mos. old for just picking him up to take him in from outside. Then he bit our two year old son on the hand for messing with his food when eating, which we thought we corrected by feeding him alone away from everyone. The vet said that this would probably correct the situation.

When he turned 4 years old we noticed that he become more aggressive now towards our 2 year old daughter. It was like he was two different dogs. Playing with her a lot then growling when she would approach him. Night and day. He acted like he loved her but would growl if she got close to his face. He also bit my husband during Thanksgiving when he pulled him by the collar away from the table after he growled at our daughter.

The bottom line is he eventually bit her in the face when she hugged him and she had to undergo facial surgery. I feel like I have failed my daughter and Snowball for we tried to put him in an Animal Rescue which refused him and the vet said it was time for Euthanasia. I am a non-working parent and always

have had close supervision with him and the kids. I was less than a foot away when the bite occurred. Bad breeding? We tried to keep the upper hand not let him rule the household? But I think that since he bit more than one of us he was aggressive?

ANSWER on DOG BITES Children:

As hard as I try I cannot stop from getting mad when I read this email. In fact I read it several hours ago and walked away before answering.

Emails like this make me think that people should have to pass a test before they are allowed to own a dog. Hell, people have to take classes to hunt and there are a lot more dog bites than there are people getting accidentally shot.

This dog gave you so many heads-up signals that it was dominant. But you either missed them and/or ignored them and/or took inappropriate actions to correct the problem. The fact is this incident was 100% an owner problem.

Any time a dog growls at a child that dog should NEVER be allowed around a child again. Every time a dog growls at a child it needs to have EXTREME corrections within 2 seconds of growling. These corrections need to be so sever that the dog NEVER FORGETS them.

It is truly beyond me how you could allow your child near this dog after it had done the things it did.

If you want to learn how badly you're screwed up you can read the article I wrote titled [DEALING WITH](#)

[A DOMINANT DOG](#), the article on [PREVENTING DOG BITES IN CHILDREN](#).

But with that said – my advice is that you should never own a dog again.

QUESTION ON DOG BITES Kid:

I am hoping you can help us. We have a 2 year old Lab/Pit mix that we adopted at 9 weeks. For the most part he is a good dog but he has some strange aggression that makes me fearful for our son. Our dog does not like our 3 year old son. Sometimes, he'll lick our son's face or what ever but most times, if the dog is sleeping and our son even walks by him, he'll growl and get up and move. It used to be he'd growl at just our son but now he's getting like that with us. If he's sleeping or lying by us, if we even touch his back to pet him, he'll growl, get up and move away from us.

Our dog also hides under things, like beds and the couch if he knows he's been bad, but if you try and get him to come out from under there, it is an all out war. He will lie under there and growl and bare his teeth and bark at you. It's hard because you can't pull him out easily to discipline him and he knows it! He's a very smart dog and very trainable when it comes to sit, stay, fetch.... But when he is bad, and he knows it, he gets mean. My husband and our dog had it out the other day because he had been bad and immediately ran under our son's bed. My husband tried to get him to come out and when he reached under there to yank him out; our dog turned on him and bit him. He bit him hard enough to draw blood.

Then the other day, my son was standing by our dog who was standing in the living room and my son put his arms over the dogs back and the dog turned around and bit him in the hand.

I am fearful that our dog is not getting enough exercise because we live in an apartment and so he's getting aggressive out of boredom. Could this be the case?? He has a ton of energy and even though we try to get him to a dog park to run, it doesn't seem to help that much and I feel bad that we can't always go as much as he needs.

I personally want to give him to someone that has room for him to run, but my husband refuses to talk about giving him up. He keeps thinking the dog will change if he works with him more, but I'm afraid that we will be good and aggressive at the training for a few weeks and then slack like we did when we first got him. I don't want this dog to hurt my son worse than he already has and frankly I'm scared of the dog. Every time I see him growl at me and bear his teeth, I am so afraid that he's just going to lunge at me one day.

We wanted a calm, friendly, family dog who our son could play with, and it hasn't turned out like that.

What should we do????

Thanks~
Amber
Gainesville, FL.

ANSWER TO DOG BITE QUESTION:

You should read the article I wrote title [DEALING WITH A DOMINANT DOG.](#)

Your dog is reaching maturity that's why he is showing these dominant signs.

Your child is in real danger RIGHT NOW! Read the article I wrote titled [PREVENTING DOG BITES IN CHILDREN.](#) This is a no fool around situation. Any dog that has this behavior should never be allowed near a child. It's not a matter of IF THIS DOG WILL BITE YOUR CHILD – it's only a MATTER OF WHEN IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.

If your husband wants to make this work – then get a dog crate and/or an outside dog kennel and the dog should NEVER be allowed near this child unless your husband has his eyes on the dog. Remember it takes about 1 second to bite a child in the face hard enough to loose an eye. So that's why you don't even go to the bathroom with the dog and child in the same room.

Then your husband needs to get a [prong](#) collar and train this dog. The dog IS NOT TRAINED if he cannot call it out from under the bed – which he can't. Unless he does this training he will find out for himself how UNTRAINED the dog is when he gets bit – each BITE WILL BE WORSE THAN THE LAST. You can read about it on my web site.

If you want to learn how to train, get my 4 hour DVD on [Basic Dog Obedience.](#) If you are not prepared to separate this dog from the child with a crate or

kennel- don't waste your money because no amount of training is going to cover up those mistakes

QUESTION ON DOG BITES Child:

Hello. One month ago we adopted our first family dog - a Shep/Boxer or Pitbull? mix from a shelter. Estimated age - under 2 - unspayed female. She went into season Nov. 1st, so we are waiting another month for spaying. We live in a house in the city. The dog has been fairly mellow so far - listens very well to me and we are working on training every day. However, in the last week, she has barked a little bit and snapped the air around my children - who are 12 and 15. They are getting scared of her. They do not mob her or act inappropriately as far as I can tell. The dog sleeps in my son's room (age 12) and last night refused to give up her spot on the bed so that my son could lie down. I had to intervene, which went very easily, but she does listen to me. I am concerned that we have a problem in the making. Any thoughts? Thanks for your time.

Maggie

ANSWER ON DOG BITES Child:

You are screwing up big time. For the sake of your children's safety you need to make changes in how you live with this dog.

I will not train you through emails but I will tell you where to go on my web site to learn how dangerous the mistakes you are making are.

Here are some articles I have written you should find and read:

Read the article [DEALING WITH DOMINANT DOGS](#)

Read the article titled [PREVENTING DOG BITES IN CHILDREN](#)

Read the article [GROUND WORK TO BECOMING A PACK LEADER](#)

When you have a dog like this it needs to be trained - I will guarantee you that this dog is not fully trained. If it were, it would not be doing the things its doing. Get a [prong](#) collar and train this dog. My 4 hour [BASIC OBEDIENCE](#) DVD will teach you how to train this dog.

Questions on Dogs that Bites Kids:

Mr. Frawley,

I am emailing you to seek your professional opinion, on my dog's behavior with my baby.

The dog gets hyper whenever you try and pick the baby up or play with him. It appears that he is extremely jealous! He has nipped at the baby on more than one occasion. If the baby is lying down and no one is touching him, the dog is fine. Mr. Frawley, I do not want to get rid of my dog. He is a good pet. I am running out of options and need some advice on what to do. I trust your opinion. What can I do to stop this behavior? I do not want to keep putting him away in his crate every time that I play

with the baby. Please advise. Thanks in advance. My dog is a Shepherd from Czech. He is 2 ½ years old.

Regards,
Troy

ANSWER ON DOG BITES kids:

Put your dog away when you get you child out. Your email makes ZERO sense!!!

Read the article I wrote on [PREVENTING DOG BITES IN CHILDREN](#) – parents with your attitude have dog attacks on their kids. It's a damn dog – who cares if it's in a crate compared to a dog bite. When dogs bite kids they bite them in the face!! I will guarantee you that most people who have dog attacks on their kids have warning signs like this.

It sounds to me like you have a dog that needs some very serious obedience training – with a prong collar. If you want to learn – get a [prong](#) collar and my 4 hour DVD on [Basic Dog Obedience](#).

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QUESTION ON DOG BITES and Kids:

I have come across your web site and found it very interesting. My husband and I own a dog named Bear. He is 6 years old. Bear is a mix of a Rottweiler and Chow. I have a very serious question for you, and hope you can help me.

Our dog is not good around children. Kids up to 13, he barks at, at occasionally nips at. Most recently he nipped at a young girls face, causing enough damage for stitches.

Bear is a very loving dog. Around my husband and I he is very affectionate, and really hates to be without us. Our problem is that we work all day, and do not get to spend enough time with him. We generally blame ourselves for this behavior. Bear is trained. He listens more to my husband than I. However, he still is a very smart dog. Why is he lashing out at children? I am very scared, and feel I want to keep him...but I don't want a child to get hurt in my presence.

What can we do to help him? We plan on having children of our own, and I am petrified of his behavior.

Please help us.

Thank you

ANSWER ON DOG BITES and Children:

This is 100% a people problem more than a dog problem. You are not going to like what I have to say – but the fact is I am more concerned with the safety

of children than I am with pussy footing around with people who are clueless about their dog's temperament.

1- Your dog is not trained – you say as much in your email. "It minds most of the time" A dog is either trained or it's not trained. Saying its mostly trained is like saying you are partially pregnant. When you say he listens MOST OF THE TIME – this means he DOES NOT MIND UNDER SITRACTION (if you don't know what this means you need to read my web site)

2- You have your head in the clouds on this dog. A "NIP" to a child's face that causes stitches is a "DOG BITE" or a "DOG ATTACK" Please – I don't have patience for people with your attitude. I can assure you that have your dog bit one of my friend's kids in the face it would be a dead dog. You either need to step to the line and come to terms with the fact that you own a dangerous dog or law enforcement will deal with you when this dog seriously hurts a child. Every time a dog bites a child it empowers the dog if it does not get seriously corrected.

3- Because this dog has not had adequate training it has issues with rank and pack drive. This is one of the reasons it looks at small children the way it does. It thinks it's a higher rank than the child.

Your choice is to change the way you live with this dog or put the dog down.

If you choose to learn how to change your ways here are some articles to read:

1- [Preventing dog bites in children](#) (which is where I am going to post this email).

2- [Dealing with Dominant Dogs](#)

3- [Ground Work](#) to establish yourself as a pack leader.

Police Release Details on Week-Old Baby's Death

COVENTRY, R.I. - Police have explained how a family dog in Coventry killed a baby girl.

Police said sometime after 8 a.m. Wednesday the infant's mother left the baby girl in the living room in a portable crib. The family's 5-year-old husky was also in the room.

Shortly afterward the mother went into the kitchen to get some juice. While in the kitchen she heard the baby cry and rushed back into the living room.

There, she found the child on the floor with a small amount of blood on her head and the dog sitting nearby. Police said the woman called her husband home from work as well as her own mother.

The family decided to take the child to the hospital to be checked out.

On the way to the hospital, they realized the baby wasn't breathing. They pulled into the nearest fire station in West Warwick.

"At that point they pulled into Station 2, and met with rescue personnel who began conducting CPR on the child in an attempt to resuscitate it," said Capt. Bryan Volpe of the Coventry Police Department.

Police said the infant's mother is too distraught to

Speak about what happened, but they have talked with the father.

“He’s strong; he’s strong for the family. He spoke to us very straightforward. He wants to give us the information as soon as he can. His wife physically can’t. She’s not in a good state right now,” said Volpe.

An autopsy report said the infant had multiple dog bites and died of internal bleeding and injuries.

Police said no decision has been made as yet concerning the fate of the dog.

The animal will remain at the Coventry dog pound until further notice.

Question on Dog Bites Child:

Mr. Fawley,

I have a 60 lb, mixed breed, 7 year old dog with hip problems and a 3 year old son. My son thinks the dog hangs the moon and the dog has been disinterested in my son until about 4 months ago. The dog is very gentle and sweet and so is my little boy.

Two months ago, my dog was chased down by a rabid woodchuck (NOT bitten). Only when my son and myself were in danger, did my dog turn and snap the woodchuck’s neck. The vet said there wasn’t even a mark on the animal.

Since that day, my dog has been very loving to my son (lying behind him as he is playing/watching TV, wanting to sleep in his room, etc.). Then yesterday, my son leaned back on the dog when she was behind him and accidentally hurt her hip. The dog

bit him on cheek, bowing her head immediately following. I was right there, yet it happened so fast and I attended to my son, not to her. I have kept them separated since. The vet's office is being flippant about this because the bite barely broke the skin. What is your advice and what are my options? Previous to this, there have been no growling, barks, meanness, ect.

Thank you,
Heather Sullivan

Ed's Answer to Dog Bites Child

You have failed your dog here. The dog basically has arthritic painful hips. You either have to control where and how the child and dog interact or find a new home for the dog. Bottom line is that children need to learn manners too. They need to learn limitations on how and when they interact with the dog.

Email on Getting Sued Over Dog Bite:

We have owned a Boxer for four years and within the last year in a half we noticed a huge change in him since we moved to a new house and kids next door to us were constantly teasing him and he hated it. A year ago our dog bit a child entering our home unannounced. The child wasn't seriously injured, it was a bite on the arm. We have three children ourselves that are in and out of the house with friends all the time so my parents took the dog to stay at their home. They would bring the dog over when they would come to visit cause he was still our family pet. A few weeks ago my parents were visiting

and brought the dog and another child entered our home unannounced with my 5 year old daughter and the dog was startled and went for her and bit her in the chest. She had 4 stitches and is recovering well. We put the dog to sleep the next day. Was that the right thing to do, or should we of seeked him help? The parents of the child sued my insurance company and got with the other little boys parents that he bit last year and now their also suing. Are we going to face legal consequences too?

Answer on Getting Sued over Dog Bite:

You made mistakes here in how you raised this dog. It gave you plenty of warnings that it was a dominant dog with the growling and nipping (before the dog bites). A dog only has to growl at a child one time and that should have been enough to:

- 1- Get help
- 2- Get the dog into serious training
- 3- Get a dog crate, and keep the dog away from all children
- 4- Or find another home for the dog

You can read the article I wrote titled Preventing Dog Bites in Children- You can find these if you go to the list of training articles and scroll down. <http://leerburg.com/articles.htm>

Odds are your insurance company will pay off these bites and drop your insurance – so I recommend that you start to look for new insurance now. Then you are prepared.

QUESTION on Aggressive Dog:

Can you ever truly say that a dog with dominance aggression is cured? I have a male Springer Spaniel that I have been working with for years. We haven't had a problem in about 1 1/2. I think we are very consistent with our way of handling him but not sure what people on the outside looking in would say. He is not allowed in our bedroom, he has to sit and stay prior to eating and also before going thru a door and then wait for the come command. We also separate him when we have visitors to the house. There are several other things we do to try and help but mainly he gets nothing from us unless he does something for us. We are planning on having children and I can only assume that you can never say that our dog is cured. And I know that we would have to keep the dog away from any child but I know how curious children are and I fear the worse. It's easy with just the two of us but to add children to the mix!!!

Beth

ANSWER:

You are in the minority – the things you are doing are the right things. You are also correct – most people cannot cure dominance – they can often control it if they do everything right but they cannot cure it.

I wrote an article on how to prevent dog bites in children – you need to read it. Fact is you also need to train your children. Training dogs is a lot like training children. A child needs to know to stay away from a dog crate – this is not an option with a dominant dog so if it means a swat on the butt then

so be it. They learn very quickly – people don't give babies enough credit for being intelligent.

If you do the things in the article you will be fine.

Chow snaps at baby, what should I do?

Hi my name is Wendy. I have a four yr old chow and a 20 month old baby. My chow is very loving and kisses the baby all the time. However if my son falls down she runs to him and snaps at him. I don't understand why she is doing this. It scares me that she may bite my baby. Also if he has food she will stand by him and watch him eating so that he will give her food. I have given the dog to my parents because I am afraid that she will hurt my son. I would like to be able to keep her. Is there anything I could do? Also she hates company of any kind. She barks and runs backwards when people come over. She will not take food from strangers. She is territorial of the home and doesn't like people other than my parents to come over. Does she sound aggressive to you? She is a big baby. When we sleep she lays outside the bedroom door whining. She won't even go off the porch to use the bathroom unless you go out with her or stand at the door and demand it until she goes. If you do think she is aggressive, do you know any breeds that you would recommend with young children? Appreciate your time.

Answer on Chow snapping at baby:

This dog is dominant. It should NEVER be allowed near children.

Read the article I wrote on preventing dog bites in children. <http://leerburg.com/articles.htm>

The only way you should own a dog is if you get a grip on how to live with and train dogs. Any breed of dog can bite a child if pack behavior is not addresses. I would recommend two or three of my training DVD's if you get another dog:

[Your puppy 8 weeks to 8 months](#)

[Basic Dog Obedience](#)

[Dealing with Dominant and Aggressive Dogs](#)

CHAMP BITES KIDS AND FRIENDS:

Hello,

My name is Kim. I have a boxer/beagle mix, male dog. "Champ" is 7 years old.

I have learned a lot this past few weeks talking to behavior dog experts.

My stories are similar to the ones I read on your websites. Champ at the age of two has become aggressive, it started with him getting loose by accident and the neighborhood kids tried to get him, he bit a little girl, she had stitches, her parents were rather good saying our dog must have smelled their dog on the girl becuz they have a female chow in heat. I accepted the reason. I was a mother at the time of two kids, I treat our dog good, always a fence in yard, never kennel bound, no kids being mean to him, truly a good environment.

Champ has nipped a few times, always seemed to be dark somehow, nipped at my friend in the front yard, dark hallway nipped at another friend, a boyfriend opened my sliding glass door held out his hand in an open hand, and champ bit him pretty good.

I am not making excuses, I always thought champ was protecting me and the two boys, because when he nipped or bit, he didn't know these people. Now I have had two episodes where my 11 year old has brought two friends into the house and champ has actually lounged at them.

My now husband is somewhat fearful for our 1 year old. My husband has a male mutt, pitbull-chow-lab-rottweiler, yes his dog is very good, friendly around everyone, our dogs get along, except when we comes to food they cannot eat around each other because than its on, severely. Is it true that once a dog tastes blood, they will always bite?

Like with everyone else champ is good around the older two, 11 & 7 year of age, listens to them. I realize now my mistakes from everything I read and know within the last two weeks. My gut says put him to sleep. Can I put a dog to sleep knowing it was my mistake on I should have been more strict, should I just be more cautious, get a shock collar, do I give up on him.

How do you know it is the right thing to do to put down your dog? Do you give up on him?

Please help me if you can.

Kim

HOW TO STOP CHAMP FROM BITING KIDS:

Kim,

You asked the question “Once a dog tastes blood will they always bite?” The answer is NO this is a STUPID OLD WIVES TAIL.

With this said you own a dominant dog and these problems have developed because of the mistakes you have made in how you choose to live with your dog. As hard as you have tried you have still made mistakes.

Certainly killing this dog is a sure solution. But it does not have to be like this if you are prepared to educate yourself and your family. Then make the necessary changes you can safely live with the dog.

I wrote an article on PREVENTING DOG BITES IN KIDS – this email will be posted there. You can find the [list of 300 or so training articles](#) I have written. I recommend that you read the article.

I can almost guarantee you that this dog is not obedience trained. At least not trained to distractions. My [Basic Dog Obedience](#) DVD will show you how to do this.

With this said obedience training is only a part of the problem, a necessary part but it’s not the entire solution for a dog like this.

I recommend that you get the DVD I recently finished (it was a 5 year project) titled DEALING WITH DOMINANT AND AGGRESSIVE DOGS <http://leerburg.com/301.htm>

This DVD is 3 ½ hours long and does not cost not a lot of money. If you go to the web page you can read the outline of what I included.

You said you had been talking to a lot of experts. Let me offer a word of advice - You are always going to be exposed to people who offer advice on how to fix your dogs behavioral issues.

The problem is that most of these people don't have the experience to offer sound advice. This results in a lot of bad information being passed out on how to deal with behavioral problems.

Pet owners like yourself need to figure out who has the experience to warrant listening to.

Dog training is not my hobby, it's a way of life. I have been training dogs for over 45 years. I have bred over 350 litters of working bloodline German Shepherds, I was a police K9 handler on a drug task force for 10 years and I have produced over 120 videos on dog training. Many of them directed towards professional dog trainers.

If my web site were printed out it would be over 10,000 pages. It is the largest dog training web site on the Internet. I have written 300 training article which are included on my site, I also have a dog training web discussion board which has 97,000 posts and growing every day. The board has 8,400 plus registered members and there is always over 100 people on the board at any time of the day.

Learn to use my web site search function.

Regards,
Ed Frawley

Is this Rot a danger to myself and my baby?

Hi and thank you for a great site!!

My name is Dísá and me and my husband have a little over 3 year old rottweiler, male.

When I met my husband, he had two great dogs, rottweilers, a male and female (sister & brother). I love rottweilers and immediately fell in love with those dogs. He got them from Britain and moved them here to Iceland, (where we live). They had to stay in quarantine for 6 months before he could take them home. They must have been about 9-10 months then.

When We started to live together the dogs were about 1 & half year old, they are very big, even for rottweilers, and the male, who we have now (he sold the female) is about 140pounds and looks more like a bear then a dog, beautiful dog as you can see from the photo.

What worries me is that my husband is working all day at his pet-shop, and is never home until very late at night. The dog has his spot under the stairs behind a fence, and has a small space outside where he drinks, eats and poops of course :/
well, I tried once to take him out for a walk cause I am a home working mom, it didn't go well at all cause I am only 110pounds and the dog is much bigger and stronger then I am, even my husband who is pretty strong and a big guy, has to use all his strength to walk him, which he almost never does!! So the dog dragged me his ways and we couldn't go home until he wanted to.

He always barks loudly at people who knock or come visit and we have to tell him to stop barking many times before he does. He has once killed a rabbit, by playing, throwing it around until there wasn't a bone unbroken in the rabbits body. He doesn't get any exercise and stay's mostly behind his fence under the stairs and is let out to his little space few times a day. Then he barks if he sees a bird or hears the children play next door. He doesn't get along with other dogs except females.

3 months ago, we had a baby girl, my husband had little time to stay home for that either. When my husband talks to the baby, the dog barks and acts moody, also all of a sudden, sometimes when I pass the dog with the baby in my arms he sometimes grrrrs. Not all the time though.

What scares me, is that no matter how I talk to my husband about taking better care of the dog by giving him time, and take him outside, let him run and breath fresh air while playing at a big area where he can move properly, I have asked him what the point is having such a big dog with such needs and don't having the time to give him what he needs, he doesn't listen and only reacts when I get angry, takes him out for a big run out, maybe once a month or even every other two months.

I see this dog as a creature whose life is depressing and miserable, he's alone in a way and his needs are not provided!!

I am scared that he might just snap one day, with no warning, and then there will be nothing stopping him, and the one who might anger him the most, (the baby) might then just be the first priority target.

I have told my husband that unless he starts taking better care of the dog, he will die or go crazy, my husband response, that I'm talking bullshit because the dog is such a good dog. Basically ignores me.

Am I right or is this fear of mine overreaction from my behalf? (I do hope I'm wrong, I really do!!)

Can you read something from the info I gave you about the dog and his (poor) life.

Is he likely to snap and go nuts? Is there a potential danger to the baby or us or something?

I know the dog is not happy, the poor thing, he just can't be!! And this must come down on his health, right??

Please, I will be so thankful if you would take a few min and answer my questions.

Thank you kindly

Kind regards,

Dísa

Ed's Answer to dominant Dog

Yes you have good reason to be concerned.

1- The dog should be in a dog crate, not have free run the way he does now. That only elevates his territorial drive

2- The dog needs serious training. If he is growling at you he does not respect you

3- In my opinion your husband should train this dog (get my [Basic Dog Obedience DVD](#) and my DVD on [Training with remote collars](#)) - then he should teach you to handle this dog

Pug Bites Baby;

Mr. Frawley,

I read through many of the emails that concerned parents have asked. They were all pretty lengthy and I am thinking that my question is short and should be fairly simple.

Do circumstances really matter when considering to keep a dog that bites a child? Should it be a one strike and you're out deal? I would have said yes to that until it happened to our family Wednesday night. My judgment feels clouded. I am hoping for you expert opinion.

My 15 month old Pug that we have enjoyed and raised from a rescue group at 3 months old bit my 2 1/2 year old daughter on the face when she went to hug him (when I wasn't looking) while he was eating his dinner. My critical mistake was not drilling it into my kids to leave him alone when he is eating. I just never saw him show aggression towards them. He is playful, forgiving, loving, and adores them. However, I am ready to place him in a new home today if necessary. Should there be no second chances for a dog that bites a child? I am also willing to do anything... be it formal training, taking him to a behaviorist, what ever it takes to do the right thing. Thanks for any advice you can offer.

Amy

Ed's Answer on dog biting baby

The answers to this email are found in this article. If you can find a way to controlling the living arrangement of this dog, train this dog and control your child then you can make this work.

The fact is this is more of an owner problem than a dog problem.

Ed

5 Year old picks up dog and gets bit in face;

Ed

I have a 14 mo old lhasa apso who is quite nippy. We have been working with him on the nipping for 4 weeks. Tonight my 5 yr old daughter came up behind him startled him as she picked him up he growled and bit her in the cheek. He did scrape her and bruised her, my husband is thinking we made a mistake in selecting this breed and wants to find a new home for him. Any suggestion? My daughter is a very mild mannered young lady and she does handle him very gently. He has also shown some forms of dominance as he has been mounting some of his toys and tries to mount my daughter's legs too. Any suggestions.

Missy

Ed's Answer

This is an owner problem more than a dog problem. A 5 year old should learn what IS and IS NOT allowed with a dog. Picking it up IS NOT ALLOWED.

The dominance issues are developing because you are not addressing pack behavior issues.

Question:

Dear Ed,

I have a question. You have been a huge help in helping me to develop a very strong obedient GSD! I have both your videos, 8 weeks and basic obedience. Now here is the question. I have an almost two year old male GSD, who is very great. He is obedient and understands who comes first. He is a bit spoiled, (I know!!), and we are preparing for our first child, who will be a boy. I have socialized him greatly around children since he was a puppy, and he has never shown aggression towards kids. I'm no dog expert but I am certain that he will be very jealous of the new addition. Is there anything that I should do to start preparing him for this new arrival, like leave baby powder smelling blankets by his cage, or anything else that people tend to allegedly know so much about!!!!? I just don't wanna take any chances with our child, and our dog feeling like there is a competition. Any help would be great! He's not a perfect dog, but he is so used to the attention being on him.

Thank so much!

Brent

Ed's Answer on Newborn Baby and Dog

You don't want to leave baby cloths near the cage - in fact you do the opposite - you train the dog to stay

away from those smells. Do what I explained in this article.

My dog attacked two kids in my yard:

Hi Ed,

My 11 month old GSD was in the garden eating when 2 young girls came in to deliver something and he attacked them.

My garden is COMPLETELY fenced and this has never been a problem before as we have very few visitors, but I did know he could be aggressive as he was VERY defensive of the home when we had people over.

Of course I corrected him severely but it did nothing for his "rage". Turned out he had a "nip" and not a bite at one of the girls and no real harm was done (no broken skin).

This morning I was taking him to my mothers and he went nuts at the neighbor (again a fenced garden) jumping on the fence trying to get him etc.

I asked the neighbor to come closer to the fence slowly and I gave him some hotdog to throw for my dog, which he ignored, and continued to jump on the fence etc. At this time I went to correct the dog, as he was barking and he bit my arm.

Now granted the skin wasn't broken and it didn't hurt but is this a sign of things to come? I've had aggression problems with this dog before and I thought we were making progress but this is a step WAY backwards.

Also last night I saw him go into avoidance while barking at someone coming into my mum's house for the first time. I had been told he was not a nervy dog by a previous evaluation I had done by a shepherd expert (he was pretty good) but the behavior last night blows that right out of the water in my mind.

Couple of questions:

1. Is this likely to continue regardless of how hard I train him (we've been working pretty hard on his training).
2. Can I do something to stop him becoming a nerve bag? Maybe he's already there!
3. Can I trust this dog? I'm not going to make excuses for any behavior.
4. If I can't trust this dog should I euthanize or rehome to a GSD rescue? I can't live with a dog I can't trust.

Some of these questions I'm asking myself but feel free to provide the answers you would give in the same situation.

This dog is well socialized and trained and is very good around kids/ other dogs etc. but seems to be becoming more and more nervous and I KNOW he's not had a bad experience as he is never off leash or out of sight.

Would I get the same behavior from a dog from working lines rather than show lines or are working class dogs less nervous in general?

I've been told that I would have been much better getting a dog from working lines as they are MUCH more stable and willing to work for you. Is this true?

Sorry for ranting for so long but I'm just annoyed right now :-/

Cheers

John

Ed's Answer to dog that attacks kids

John, while this can be an age issue the dog obviously has a few screws loose in his head. I had a look at a couple of the web sites listed above. More wordy that effective in my opinion.

I recently read a web site that said the following on its first page "A true top dog is more likely to share a toy, a bone, or a sleeping place, than fight over one." That's just flat wrong.

Bottom line is the dog sounds more like it has weak nerves than a dominance problem. When a dog is at the level your dog is at you can clicker these dogs to death and socialize the snot out of them and you will still have weak nerved sharp dog. Clickers and socializing will help dogs with less of a problem but your dog is on the edge (the edge of a needle)

You need to do serious obedience training with the dog. Teach it that inappropriate aggression will always result in a correction that it will remember. The dog needs to remember the correction the next time it thinks it needs to show aggression.

You can dance around the bush as much as you wish but if your dog does not respect the possible correction more than it fears the GHOSTS IN ITS HEAD you will never solve this problem.

This does not mean you go out and tear his head off in OB training - you set your bond with the dog there. Teach him that you are consistent and fair in your corrections along with praising the heck out of him when he does what you ask. But you need to correct to the level of control for aggression.

Food is not the problem for this dog. You found this out with your neighbor. It will ignore food when stressed.

Here are some DVD's to consider:

[Basic Dog Obedience](#)

[Dealing with Dominant and Aggressive Dogs](#)

[Remote Collar Training for the Pet Owner](#)

QUESTION on Preventing Dogs from Biting Children:

Mr. Frawley,

I am working on something regarding dog safety in a children's program I teach. I have taught arms down at the sides, not in a fist, for a curious dog who approaches a child. In the class I was teaching today, someone who is a pathologist in our Vet School suggested the crossed arms. A Vet Tech who is also watching the class checked him on that and said that the arms at the sides were fine for a curious dog.

In a search, I have both suggestions from different groups...Humane Society says hands at the side... other organizations say "Like a tree with your arms wrapped around you," and the American Vet Association and CDC just say be still with no suggestions on the arms.

Your site indicates that you really understand behavior of dogs, their dominance, and that you really seem to care for children and the dog bites. So, I'm going to pose the question to you...what is best, and do you have any supporting research? As you can tell, I work at a university and nothing seems to work without supporting research with people who have PhD's. ;) The pathologist is going to write a letter to my supervisor suggesting the change. I am teaching from a curriculum that was researched 10 years ago and I want to make sure that I'm teaching the right thing.

Thank you for your help.

(Oh, my gosh, and the pictures of the mastiff on the baby killed me!)

Thank you,

Joan

ANSWER:

Fold the hands. If a dog approaches a child with arms down by his side, the dog will automatically smell the child's hands. Kids' hands always have interesting smells (like food). When a dog smells the hand - most kids will jerk the hand away. This quick movement will trigger prey drive and if a dog is inclined to bite it

will bite in that moment.

I hope this helps.

Question:

Hi,

My husband and I are owners of a chow that is around 6 years old. We just had a baby about a year ago and since then his attitude has changed towards me and I don't know what to do. I have attempted on multiple occasions to put the dog outside or tell him simple commands and when I attempt this he tries to bite my hand or does a semi-lunge. He has become aggressive and does not like to listen to me. I feel scared to have my daughter on the ground when the dog is inside but I am also scared to discipline him when my husband is not home.

I feel it is just a matter of time and Simba will bite either me or my daughter.

I want to get rid of the dog and my husband keeps saying nothing will happen. My way of thinking is to prevent an accident from happening instead of waiting for the accident to happen.

Please help!

Thanks!
Kimberly

ED's ANSWER:

I wrote an article titled PREVENTING DOG BITES IN CHILDREN. You can find the [list of 300 or so training](#)

[articles](#) I have written.

I recommend you and your husband read it and follow the advice.

Be careful with this dog. It's not trained.

If you want to make it work you can buy it means making changes in how you live with the dog and then training the dog.

I recommend that you get the 4 ½ hour DVD I did on my [Basic Obedience Program](#).

You will probably find that you have not had the full picture on the training steps for training your dog. A dog must go through training steps before it can be considered fully trained.

When you read the description of the DVD on my web site you will find out why I am not a fan of taking an untrained dog to obedience classes. No professional dog trainer would ever take his dog to an obedience class with 15 or 20 untrained dogs and try and train it there. Dogs cannot learn when faced with this kind of distraction.

If you read the testimonials on my DVD you will see that my customers feel the same way.

I also recommend that you read the article I recently wrote titled [The Theory of Corrections in Dog Training](#).

While obedience training is not the solution to all behavioral issue it most defiantly is part of the solution for every single behavioral problem.

I recommend that you get the DVD I recently finished (it was a 5 year project) titled [Dealing with Dominant and Aggressive Dogs](#)

This DVD is 3 ½ hours long and does not cost not a lot of money. If you go to the web page you can read the outline of what I included.

Ed Frawley

Where To Go From Here

Your Puppy 8 Weeks to 8 Months

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Ed Frawley's Philosophy of Dog Training



Article

The Theory of Corrections in Dog Training



Article

Ground Work to Establish Pack Structure with Adult Dogs



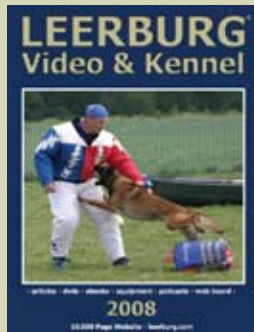
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Pod Casts

[Ed Frawley's Philosophy of Dog Training.](#) FREE DOWNLOAD

13 Minutes This is a podcast of [this written article](#) Ed Frawley's dog training philosophy after 45 years of dog training

[Who Can Pet My Puppy?](#) FREE DOWNLOAD

9 Minutes long. Why I don't allow strangers to pet my puppies and dogs. This is a podcast of an article I recently wrote that explains why we don't allow strangers to pet out puppies or our dogs.

[Training Puppies NOT TO BITE](#) FREE DOWNLOAD

8 Minutes - This podcast teach's people how to deal with puppies that bite. When pet owners bring a cute little puppy home and it turns into an alligator, most people don't know what to do. This podcast explains

why this is happening and offers several options to solve the problem. You can read the article on my web site by [clicking here](#).

[The Groundwork to Becoming Your Puppy's Pack Leader](#) FREE DOWNLOAD

This 21 minute podcast explains how Ed Frawley from Leerburg Kennels raises puppies in his home. Ed has bred over 350 litters of German Shepherds in the last 30 years. This podcast explains how to develop a family pack structure that a puppy understands. It explains how to establish a relationship of trust and understanding between a puppy and a new owner.