

Introducing Dogs and Babies



By: Ed Frawley



Leerburg Kennels

Foreword

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[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 DVDs. He was a police K9 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.

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My son Eric and our dog Sheba - 1978

Other Article on Preventing Dog Bites on Children:

[Preventing Dog Bites in Children](#)

[Emails from People Whose Dogs Have Attacked Children](#)

Ed Frawley's Philosophy of Dog Training



Article

I get many emails from people who own dogs and are about to add a baby to their family. These people love their dogs but want to make sure that the dog learns to accept the presence of a new member to the family. They ask what issues need to be considered to keep their new baby safe.

Many dogs do learn to live with babies (some cannot). This article will give you a few ideas to think about with your dog and your new baby.

Before we get into steps to take to be sure your baby remains safe I need to point out a few facts:

- On average in America there are 1,200 to 2,000 children killed by their parents every year. Over the past 16 years fatal attacks from dogs have averaged between 15 and 18 per year.
- Only about 25 children (between birth and 11 months) were killed by dogs in this country from 1979 to 1988. (Voith, 1984)

- It is felt that most children are killed by dogs as a result of predatory issues and not rank drive or pack issues. Predatory behavior is increased as the number of dogs in a family increases.
- Most dogs that kill children have not exhibited prior aggression tendencies (Pinckney and Kennedy, 1982).
- Most attacks on children are against older boys.
- Between 1989 and 1994 there were 109 dog related fatalities in America, 57% of them were children under 10 years of age. (Sacks and coworkers 1996b)

Preventing Dog Bites in Children



eBook

So with this said, the truth is there is about 100 times more chance of a child being killed by a parent or relative rather than a dog. The unfortunate fact is that the news media sensationalizes the death of a child as a result of a pet attack. These same people call for additional laws on breed bans and additional laws controlling our pets.

If a dog has never been around babies before they may not look at a baby as a human. To insure their baby's safety, owners need to step back and take a look at their dog's temperament. They have to ask some questions:

- 1 - Has the dog ever been aggressive to strangers?
- 2 - Has the dog ever been aggressive to strange children?
- 3 - Has the dog ever been aggressive to smaller animals?

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then you need to be very careful with this dog around a new baby. If the answer to one of these questions is "yes," this does not mean that this dog cannot learn to accept a baby. It simply means that you need to be very careful and not make any mistakes.



I like to tell people that dog training is not rocket science. Training a dog is pretty much common sense.

Here are the Things to Consider When a New Baby is Going to Come into a Home:

1 - Make sure the dog is fully obedience trained. If you have questions on this you should refer to my training video titled [Basic Dog Obedience](#). The dog should be trained well enough that you can tell it to go lay down on his rug, or in his crate. This means that the dog will go and stay there.

I believe that this kind of training should be done motivationally. In other words, teach the dog to do it for a food or a toy reward. But once the dog understands the command it needs to be reinforced with a prong collar correction if the dog does not mind. I call prong collars "power steering on dogs." They allow small people to control good-sized dogs.

2 - Get a dog crate and crate train the dog. The crate should **NEVER** be in the bedroom. If the dog becomes overly excited when the baby cries it can be put in the crate. Give it a bone or a rubber Kong with a little cream cheese or peanut butter in middle to keep him interested and busy.

3 - Never allow the dog in the baby's bedroom - not even when you are present. The bedrooms (including your own) should always be off limits. This is especially true to the baby's room.

4 - The dog should **NEVER** be allowed to be near the baby when it is not being supervised - not even for one minute.

5 - Once the baby is born they will bring a blanket with the baby scent home (or a dirty baby diaper) to wrap a doll in. When this is laid on the floor the dog is corrected for going near it. It can't even go and smell it.

6 - When you bring the baby home it is a good idea to have it be a nice quiet introduction. Mom should first meet the dog without the baby.

7 - Homecoming should not be a loud party. When the baby is brought in, the dog should be placed in a "down-stay" several feet from where mom and baby are sitting.

The dog **IS NOT ALLOWED** to smell the baby. Dogs have an excellent sense of smell. There is no reason to allow the dog to come up and smell the baby as soon as it gets home from the hospital. The dog can smell the baby from across the room without any problem.

If there is any concern about the obedience and control of the dog at any time the baby is present, it should either be on leash or in a dog crate.

6 - Get the dog a selection of new dog toys before the baby comes home. Some people will keep the toys available in a basket in the living room. Others prefer to allow the dog to know that there are new toys but they control when the dog gets access to them. They don't get bored with the toys.

People ask, "When can their dog be allowed to come up and smell or lick the baby?" I cannot and would not answer this question.

Allowing a dog to lick a baby is a dangerous thing to do. Although this is usually a sign of acceptance and submission, one never knows exactly what the dog has been licking just before licking the baby.

I also just saw an add on TV where a dog was drinking from the toilet when the owner came home from work, then the dog runs down and gives the owner a big lick on the chops. Have you ever watched a dog lick its own butt? Pretty disgusting.

For those pet owners who feel their dog cannot accept a baby or may be too dangerous around the baby, there is always a dog crate and or an outside dog kennel. I have owned a lot of dogs in my life that I would never allow around babies. I recognized the problems with these dogs and just never let them near my boys.

On the other hand I have had many dogs who indeed were part of my family.

So the bottom line is that introducing a dog to a new baby revolves around common sense and being a responsible pet owner.



Email

QUESTION:

I am going to be having a baby in August and I am concerned that my husband needs to find a new home for his dog. He has a 2 year old Bull Dog mix which doesn't like children and some adults. The dog will lunge at them while they are petting him. I was sitting with my

niece, who was on the floor in front of him petting him when after about a minute of it he lunged at her. What I need help with is after we have him neutered will he still react to children in this way or mine?

ANSWER:

Make your husband an offer.

Either find a new home for the dog or find a new wife.

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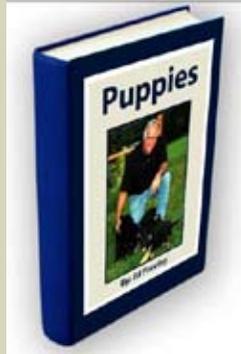
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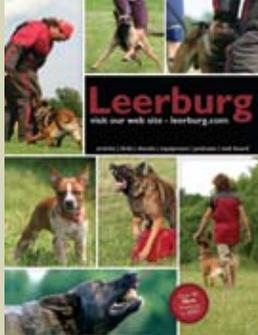


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