



DOG AWARE!

**helpful hints
and useful
tips for dog
ownership
in a
FAMILY
setting**

Never leave a child alone with a dog



I'm Jacinta Phillips. I'm a mother of 3 year old twins, and I've been a dog owner for 13 years. I worried how my dog would react to two new members of the family, so I took advice from a dog behaviourist, and I used it. It was hard work to change the things I was doing, and it took a lot of patience.

Even then, as time went on, I found that I had less time and energy for my canine friend. I was finding it hard to walk, groom and play with him, due to the responsibilities that came with two new children, and the time they needed.

I was very concerned for the safety of my twins so I made the agonising decision to find a new home for my dog. I did this because I couldn't make sure that my dog was **never left alone with my children**. No matter how well you think you know your dog, they are a descendant of the wolf family and you can never trust 100% that their instincts won't come out.

When I hear on the news and see in the papers about children being attacked by a family pet, these horror stories chill me to the bone.

This is why I have written this booklet, to help you make all the right decisions about owning a dog while your children are small.

A dog in the family - think first!



can I afford the cost? the cost of the dog, food, vets, vaccinations, castration / spaying, boarding kennels



the time – for training my dog, walking and grooming



the exercise needed – every day, in all weathers



dogs, like humans, need company – is there someone home most of the day?



the choice of breed – size and temperament are vital things to consider, also the lifespan of the dog



safety around children – care and attention are needed **constantly** to keep children safe

Things your dog will need



A crate - great! a safe and quiet place for your dog and peace of mind for you



Basic training your dog needs to respond to simple commands like **sit** and **stay**



Feed bowls and water bowls which you can keep clean, in a feed area, away from children



Leads that last – good quality leather leads, and rope slip leads (don't get retractable leads – tangled trouble!)

Home and garden safety

Making your home and garden safe is top priority for your child and dog

Safety Gates will keep your dog out of the room when baby is sleeping, and give the dog peace while feeding

Start off right with simple rules about territory - a dog is best kept downstairs, and **never** allowed in children's bedrooms

Safe Garden and hole-free fences










Gates to the garden need strong secure latches, and always keeping shut

Poo Corner! Your dog needs a space in the garden, and **you** will need to clean this daily

A new member of the familyyour dog

Children are fun

They scream with delight, they romp and tumble, and jump around. So, if we are bringing a dog into the family, we must teach our children to **respect** their new pet.

-  Dogs do not like to be jumped on
-  Loud and sudden noises, and screaming even in fun can upset them
-  A child could be bitten by a frightened dog, if play is too rough and boisterous
-  Play-wrestling with your dog encourages bad behaviour. He may bite to defend himself
-  Dogs can be possessive of their toys. Tug-of-war games can provoke them
-  Never let your children hold a dog against its will
-  Don't let them tease the dog, like "stealing" their toys for fun. It leads to aggression
-  Dogs don't like to have their tails, ears or fur pulled
-  Don't go near your dog while he is eating

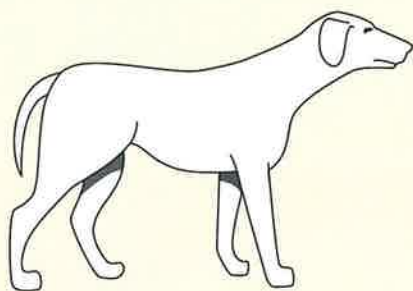
Never leave a child alone with a dog

A new member of the Pack.....your baby

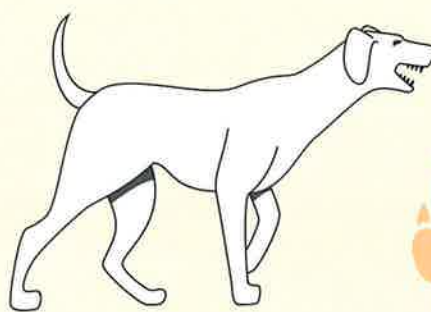
Bringing a new baby home is a big change for the whole household. Your dog was there first. **Don't push him aside**, consider his feelings. It is crucial for your baby's safety that changes are made at home **before** baby arrives.

-  Baby's room is totally **off limits** to your dog. He should never be allowed in there, even if you are present
-  Put new equipment like Highchairs and Moses baskets out before baby's arrival so your dog can get used to them
-  Start reducing your time with the dog before baby comes home. That way, he won't feel so deprived
-  Introduce dog and baby to each other **off** home premises before going indoors to the dog's territory
-  Do **not** allow your dog to lick baby
-  Keep your dog in a **down** position. Don't let him jump up
-  reassure your dog with praise and treats
-  **Be Aware!** Dogs do not like screaming babies. It is advisable to remove your dog from the room, with plenty of reassuring praise
-  A crying baby with waving arms can look very much like wounded prey. Dogs retain their primitive instincts. Take care
-  Keep baby at a height that is above the dog's eye level. This helps make the baby's pack status clear
-  Be patient
-  **Praise your dog for good behaviour around the baby**

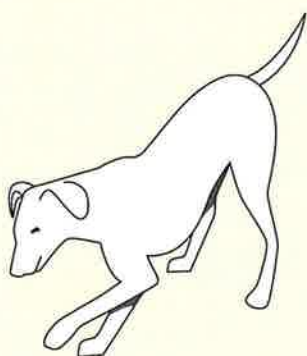
Dogs are descendants from the wolf family



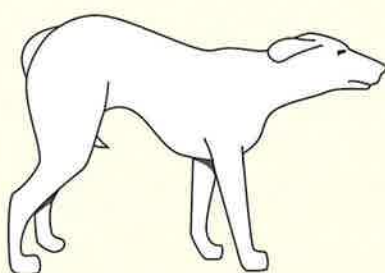
Normal



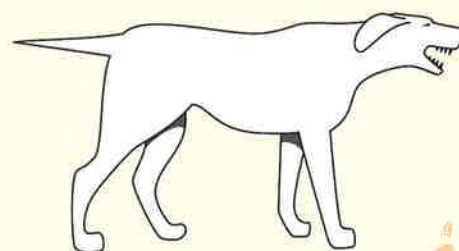
Angry



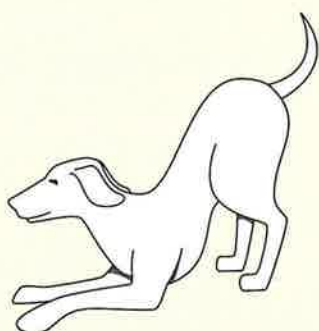
Wants to play or run around



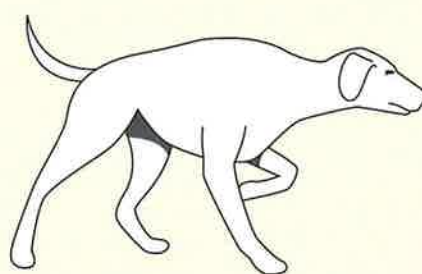
Afraid



Afraid and Angry



Wants to play a game



Excited

Responsible dog owners who don't intend to breed from their pet, take decisions early about castration and spaying.

There are real benefits for both owner and dog:

An un-castrated male dog will follow his instincts – and female dogs in heat.

He will fight more, and is very likely to father unwanted litters.








A castrated dog will still cock his leg to urinate, but he will not scent like an un-castrated dog

A female dog, un-spayed, will come into heat regularly and will need to be kept in to prevent unwanted mating, and a lot of unwanted attention.






Spare yourself the time, cost and difficulty of re-homing litters of pups.

Castrated and spayed dogs live longer, have fewer problems, and lead a quieter life!

Out and About





-  Poo on the wheels goes round and round – and into the house. Can you and your older children be responsible for picking up after the dog?
-  You are required by law to remove the poo if your dog fouls in a public place.
-  Remember health problems like Toxocara Canis. Parasites in dog faeces can cause blindness. Pavement or park, dog faeces are a risk to children.
-  Walking your dog with the buggy is not recommended, but that isn't practically possible for some. If you can, get your dog used to walking alongside the pushchair **before** baby comes
-  A Pushchair is tricky enough to manage, without a dog as well. Don't tie your dog to the pram. One distraction, and off it goes!
-  You may encounter stray dogs anywhere, and there is no way of knowing their temperament. Don't approach them
-  Don't let your child intervene in a dog fight

Other people's dogs

-  Don't allow your child to approach another person's dog without asking the owner's permission first
-  Tuck your fingers in, offer the back of your hand first, and stroke new dogs under the chin, then they will know you are no threat
-  Never approach with an open hand, or instantly the dog will think you intend to hit him
-  When your baby or child needs a babysitter while you go out, make sure they are familiar and at ease with your dog (and know your "dog rules") and can easily cope looking after both.
-  Have other family members got a dog? If they are likely to visit, get dogs and children happy together as soon as possible. An unsocial dog can be a problem dog

Sources of help and advice

Your Local Authority Dog Warden Service (www.direct.gov.uk) can advise on

-  finding local dog training classes
-  their low - cost Microchipping service
-  legislation, nuisance and fouling
-  what to do if you can't cope with your pet

Your Vet

Choosing a vet is a very important decision. Ask around. Ask the advice of other pet owners. Word of mouth is usually trustworthy!

The PDSA

The PDSA (0800 917 2509) is the UK's leading veterinary charity caring for more than 350,000 pet patients belonging to people in need. If you are in receipt of Housing or Council Tax Benefit they may provide free veterinary treatment to your sick or injured animal, and they promote responsible pet ownership www.pdsa.org.uk

The Young Kennel Club 0870 6066750

The Young Kennel Club is all about helping young dog lovers learn new skills, build confidence and make new friends. They welcome all young dog fans between 6-24 years, with sections aimed towards Kids, Teens and Seniors. www.ykc.org.uk

Death of a pet

The **Pet Bereavement Support Service** (PBSS) offers **support** and understanding to **bereaved pet** owners through a national network of trained telephone volunteers:

www.bluecross.org.uk



Newcastle-under-Lyme
Children's Centre

'every family matters'



The logo for Staffordshire County Council, which consists of two interlocking yellow rings.
Staffordshire
County Council

for further copies of this leaflet, please contact
Newcastle under Lyme Children's Centre 01782 296100