

# NATIONAL DOG BITE PREVENTION WEEK

## Third Week of May

### FOCUSES ON CHILDREN AS PRIMARY VICTIMS

**Did you know that half of all children will be bitten by the time they turn twelve? The U.S. Postal Service supports responsible pet ownership and education as a cure for this national epidemic.**

#### **The 3 Most Important Things to Teach Your Kids**

- 1. Dogs Don't Like Hugs and Kisses** – Teach your kids not to hug or kiss a dog on the face. Hugging the family dog or face-to-face contact are common causes of bites to the face. Instead, teach kids to circle touch the dog on the side of the neck.
- 2. Be a Tree if a Strange Dog Approaches** – Teach kids to stand still, like a tree. Trees are boring and the dog will eventually go away. Learn to act like a rock if you are already on the ground. This usually works for strange dogs and anytime the family dog gets too frisky or becomes aggressive.
- 3. Never Tease a Dog** – and never disturb a dog that's sleeping, eating or protecting something.

#### **The 2 Most Important Things Parents Can Do**

- 1. Supervise** – Don't assume your dog is good with kids. If a toddler must interact with your dog, you should have your hands on the dog too. Even if your dog is great with kids and has never bitten – why take a chance?
- 2. Train the dog** – Take your dog to training classes where positive-reinforcement is used. Never pin, shake, choke, hold the dog down or roll the dog over to teach it a lesson. Dogs treated this way are likely to turn their aggression on weaker family members. Involve older children in training the family dog while supervising. Don't allow children to punish the dog. Condition the dog to enjoy the presence and actions of children using positive experiences.

#### **The 3 Most Important Things Dog Owners Can Do**

- 1. Spay or Neuter Your Dog** – Neutered pets are calmer, healthier and less likely to be aggressive. Neutering prevents unwanted dogs that may end up in shelters or in less than ideal conditions where they may grow up to be poorly socialized or aggressive.
- 2. Condition Your Dog for the World** – Give your puppy lots of new positive experiences. Train using positive methods i.e. praise touch and voice, clicker training.
- 3. Supervise Your Dog** – Supervise your dog at all times around children. Do not allow children to hug and kiss the dog. If visiting children are bothering your dog, put the dog away or send the children home.



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