

Adopted Dog Handbook

FOR FAMILIES WITH KIDS



Hi there

Congratulations on the adoption of your new dog! You have a lot on your plate - getting to know your new dog, and managing expectations with your kids about their new family member.

You may be wondering what you have gotten yourself into. That's normal. It can feel overwhelming when you are juggling kids and dogs at the same time. But have no fear. I'm a mom too, so I get it.

I'm Michelle, founder of Pooch Parenting. I'm a Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT-KA), Family Dog Mediator, mom and educator with 16 years of experience. You don't have to do this alone. I've been there, and I get what you are going through.

In this handbook, you'll find a small handful of my best sanity saving tips for parents of kids and dogs. They will help you through some of the most common questions, fears, and challenges that you may experience with your new dog.

These are just the tip of the iceberg. If you'd like more support for the daily challenges your family will experience, you can [join my club for parents with dogs](#) - don't miss your special savings on the last page of this handbook.

XOXO
Michelle



BECAUSE YOU DESERVE PEACE OF MIND



NEW DOG TIPS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



Congratulations on adding a new dog to your family! This is a time of big transition - both for the dog and for your children. This tip sheet will help to set your entire family up for success, dog included. Before we dive in, please remember that your dog needs YOUR help to make good choices. That means that you will need to use a combination of management, training and relationship building exercises to ensure that your new dog bonds with you and feels safe with your family. Using rewards with your new dog will help them to understand what behaviors you like, resulting in the likelihood you will see more good behavior.



Your new dog needs time to decompress and learn the lay of the land at home. Kids should ignore the dog as much as possible for a few days and dog should spend time with adult members of the household.

Every breed has different behavior tendencies based on how they have been bred for hundreds of years. Mixed breed dogs are no exception. MANY breeds love to chase and herd children. I can show you strategies to manage this unwanted behavior.

Watch your dog's body language for clues that they are overwhelmed (lip licks, looking away, ears back, yawning). Stress can be caused by noise, tantrums, running and unpredictable behavior. Toddlers and noisy children often cause more stress than babies do. I'll guide you through these clues inside [my club](#) for parents with dogs.

Most dogs don't leave when they are uncomfortable. They often remain in place because they want to be close to you. You can cue your dog to move with treats if you suspect that current activities might cause stress. I can show you how.

Children should never approach a sleeping dog or one who is eating or enjoying a bone in case they get surprised or are protective of their treasures. Toss treats to dogs who are eating as you walk past so they see you as a giver and not a taker.

New Puppy Prep for Families with Children



Adding a puppy to your family is a BIG decision. Most families don't realize how challenging puppies can be, let alone how the difficulty grows exponentially when there are children in the mix. While puppies can be snuggly and loving, they also have sharp teeth and love to chase anything that moves - kids included. In order to set your family up for success, it's best to prepare your physical space and your expectations in advance.

Help your kids to understand that puppies have feelings and that they need lots of sleep and play breaks.

Puppies need to consent to interactions with kids. Children under age 9 should not carry the puppy because they are not developmentally coordinated enough to help puppy feel safe.

Be well stocked with puzzle toys, chews, tugs and treats so puppies are mentally engaged.

Puppies are not toys. Parents decide when it's appropriate to interact with the puppy.

Buy baby gates and pens to create safe zones for your kids and puppy. Make these spaces positive for your puppy.

Puppies who are resting, eating or chewing a special bone are 100% off limits to children.

Puppies often bite when they are over tired and need a nap.

Setting Up for Safety

Parents with kids and new dogs are notoriously tired and overwhelmed. By using pens, gates and mental enrichment ideas, your clients can breathe a little easier. Both children and dogs can have safe zones in the house, enabling parents to do daily tasks, such as cooking, laundry or using the computer. Management is only one component of safe dog and child interactions, but it's the perfect starting point.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT



Pens can be used to contain either the baby or the dog. My favorite is the Superyard by Toddleroo. The vertical slats can prevent the baby or dog from climbing out.



Rotate who uses the pen, so the dog or baby get special time with parents. Offers relief when 100% supervision isn't possible. Not suitable if parent leaves the room.



I love the swing tension gate by Regalo. It opens with one hand and is too tall for most dogs to jump. Get the tallest one possible.

MENTAL ENRICHMENT FOR DOGS



The Kong Wobbler requires dogs to do some problem solving to get their meal. Mental enrichment can prevent dogs from becoming bored and destructive.



This is one of our favorite food toys for our dogs. They push the ball around to make their food come out of a hole. It is fun and keeps them busy for awhile so parents can focus on the new baby.



By using a snuffle mat like this one, dogs become mentally engaged by using their nose to find food. Try this feeding strategy while making dinner.

Keeping the Peace

When parenting kids and dogs at the same time, the Golden Rule is your best friend. Everyone needs to be treated with respect. This will keep the whole family physically and emotionally safe.

How Kids SHOULD Interact with Dogs

Use common sense.

Be polite and kind to pets



Learn to recognize when your dog is scared or anxious



Play appropriate games with pets, such as:

Fetch



Training tricks (like roll over, shake, beg, etc.)

Walking and running with a dog



Playing hide-n-seek

Always remember:

Supervise all interactions. Accidents can happen in a split second.



Train your dog to associate the kids with positive experiences so he'll be more likely to tolerate your child in case she accidentally interacts inappropriately.



How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

Avoid taking people's food



Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating



Avoid stealing other people's toys



Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys



Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face



Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face



Avoid bothering when asleep



Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.



Avoid pestering



Avoid grabbing tail/ears



Avoid climbing on or trampling



Avoid climbing on or trampling



Avoid pinching



Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.



Avoid screaming around



Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.



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SET UP YOUR WHOLE FAMILY FOR SUCCESS

Use management, such as baby gates, pens and doors to provide some separation. Everyone needs a break sometimes.

Dogs are not toys, dress-up dolls or chairs. They need to consent to all interactions.

Teach your kiddos to leave your dogs alone if they are sleeping, eating or chewing on a bone. Use barriers to prevent access if your kids are too young to follow directions.

Become a dog body language expert. This will help you to intervene when your dog needs support or a break. This is a topic that I teach regularly to members of my Thriving Parents of Kids and Dogs program.

How Does Your Dog Feel?

Many parents say it was a total surprise when their dog lunged at their child. But truth be told, dogs communicate in "whispers" before they begin to "shout." By understanding your dog's stress signals, you can intervene before the dog escalates to a growl, lunge or bite.



Dogs often yawn at times of stress. Look at the context – are they being restrained? Is there a crying baby nearby or a new piece of baby equipment?



Tongue flicks can indicate discomfort when it's not associated with eating and drinking.



Not all licking is "kissing." This dog is asking for space. If the licking feels frantic, remove your child in a timely manner.



Ears back, tight jaw, paw lifted and tail down are all signs of a fearful dog.



The term "whale eye" is often used when the whites around the eyes are visible. It's a clear sign of stress. This dog is also cowering, asking for space.



Dogs who turn away are often trying to appease you or another threat. They are trying to say they mean no harm. Back away.



QUIZ TIME: SHOULD YOU INTERVENE?

ANSWERS

Yes! This dog is not comfortable. By intervening, you can provide relief to the dog and avoid a growl or bite.

Notice how the toddler is crawling towards the dog? The yawn is a big giveaway that the dog is uncomfortable with the child's approach.

Gently approach your child and redirect them somewhere else away from the dog. By reacting calmly, you are not giving your dog something else to worry about.



QUIZ TIME: SHOULD YOU INTERVENE?

ANSWERS

No, this dog is happy. But keep your eyes open for changes in body language or shifts in their interactions.

Great things about this interaction:

- The dog approached the child by choice.
- The dog is doing a trick and looks like it's interested in engaging with the girl.
- The dog's body language is "loose" and free from tension

Watch for sudden changes in the dog or child's behavior. Polite play can shift quickly into disrespectful interactions.

New Adopters!

Save \$50 on these Dog & Child Resources from Pooch Parenting



Pooch Parenting Society

Save \$50 on an annual subscription to The Pooch Parenting Society – support for parents with dogs and perfect for your first year with your new dog.



Kids & Dogs 101 On-Demand Workshop

Save \$50 on this on-demand workshop for parents raising kids and dogs together. Learn to thrive with your new dog.

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