



Children and Puppies: Setting Them Up for Success Together

By Nicolette Javorsek – Pet Behaviour Consultant

Life with a new puppy is exciting, especially for children! But puppies and young dogs need gentle, respectful interactions to feel safe and confident around children. Teaching children how to interact appropriately with dogs helps build positive relationships and can prevent fear, overwhelm, and accidents. Children should be encouraged to use calm voices, gentle hands, and enjoy appropriate games such as fetch, simple training, hide-and-seek, and walking with an adult. Just as importantly, dogs should not be disturbed when chewing, eating, resting or sleeping.

The first few months of a puppy's life are a critical learning period, where their experiences shape how they respond to people, children and the environments around them.

Supervision is essential, as accidents can happen in a split second. Children should be taught to avoid hugging dogs, putting their face close to a dog's face, grabbing ears or tails, climbing on dogs, or taking toys and food away. Helping your puppy associate children with calm and positive experiences can make a big difference to your puppy's confidence and behaviour as they grow, and the overall harmony at home.

Research and clinical experience show that puppies who receive early training and positive social experiences are more likely to grow into calm, confident and resilient dogs who can cope well with new environments, people and everyday family life.

For practical guidance, refer to these posters:



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.

For additional Low Stress Handling information, posters, flyers, books, and DVDs, please visit our website at <http://DrSophiaYin.com>



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How Kids Should Interact With Dogs



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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How Kids Should NOT Interact With Dogs

Families often tell us the hardest parts of puppy care are the everyday things, especially toilet training, jumping up, biting and chewing, walking on lead, and coming when called (recall). These are all normal puppy behaviours, and with the right guidance and positive, reward-based training, they become much easier to manage. Starting early, keeping things consistent, and supporting your puppy's learning makes all the difference.

Our Puppy Preschool and Canine Kindy classes at Turrumurra Veterinary Hospital help families build these important foundations early, with practical guidance on understanding your puppy, building strong foundation behaviours, teaching safe interactions, and setting them up for success in family life.



We love welcoming local families and their puppies into our classes and supporting our community to raise calm, confident and well-adjusted dogs.

For younger puppies (8–16 weeks), we recommend our Puppy Preschool classes, which provide a strong foundation for our Canine Kindy classes (4–18 months).

To book into our puppy classes, please call us on (02) 9988 0198 to secure your spot, or visit our website for more information:

<https://www.turramurravet.com.au/puppy-training/>

The experiences you create between your children and your puppy today will shape the relationship they share tomorrow – getting it right early can make all the difference.