

TEACHING FIRST GRADE STUDENTS TO BE SAFE AROUND DOGS

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This lesson plan should be used in conjunction with 'BOW WOW "OW!"' an 8-minute dog safety video illustrating more than 12 basic dog safety teaching points. To order a copy of the video, go to www.BowWowOw.com for an order form or contact us via email at BowWowOwVideo@aol.com or call WAAAHOO Productions at 775-688-6278.

DOG SAFETY PRESENTATION FOR FIRST GRADE STUDENTS

Purpose of this instruction: There are hundreds of dog and cat bites investigated each year by animal control agencies. The Health Department hopes many of these bites can be prevented. Our purpose today is to give you some information that will help keep you safe and hopefully prevent a dog from biting you.

Goal: Sometimes a policeman gives you safety rules, like look both ways before you cross the street. This prevents you from getting hit by a car. I want to give you safety rules to keep you from getting bit by a dog.

We are going to talk about:

- Why do dogs bite?
- How do you know if a dog is friendly?
- How do you avoid a bite?
- What do you do if a dog attacks or bites you?

Materials: You may want to bring a stuffed dog to the class to demonstrate certain points during your explanations or instructions.

Why do dogs bite children?

1. You are playing with them and they get excited and jump up on you. Since they don't have hands to pull at your clothes, they tug with their mouth, and may accidentally bite you. They might be playing with you and try to get the ball or chew toy away from you with their mouth and bite your hand.
2. Dogs believe they own things. Their dog dish and water dish belong to them. Their toys, blankets, balls, bones or chewies, belong to them. If we try to take these away, the dog may become protective and try to get them back. Remember, he uses his mouth to get things.
3. Dogs have a territory; it is the house and yard where they live. The dog could be left in the family car for a few minutes, too. When we visit a friend at his house, his dog may see us as an enemy. A dog will protect his owner and may bite anyone who gets close to his owner. The dog might also bite you if you get too close to him in his car because he thinks he is protecting the car. Dogs also protect everyone in the family.

If the dog thinks your sister is in danger because your daddy is playing with her, the dog could bite your daddy.

4. A mother dog will protect her puppies, just like your mother protects you. If a stranger gets too close to you, your mother holds you close. A mother dog may bite you if you get too close to her puppies.
5. A dog who doesn't feel well or is in pain will bite anyone because he is afraid you might make him hurt more if you touch him.
6. A dog who is frightened by a loud noise or quick movement may also bite. Most dogs will run under a bed or behind a chair/couch when it thunders. But, if you surprise a dog, he might jump at you and bite you.

Do you know how to understand a dog?

1. Dogs bark to talk to us. They "speak" for food. They warn us by barking if someone comes to the door. They cry if they are hurt. They howl if they are lonely.
2. What does a wagging tail mean? Usually it means the dog is happy or excited. The tail held between the legs means they are worried or fearful. Dogs are more ready to bite when they are afraid and don't know you.
3. If the tail is held up and still, the dog is on-guard and may be getting ready to pounce. Do you know what it means if the dogs ears are low or high? If the dogs ears are straight up, they are at attention and you don't know what they might do? If the ears are hanging low, the dog is usually relaxed.
4. A dog showing his teeth could mean what? He is warning you. He may also growl or snap at you. He is not happy when he shows his teeth.
5. Have you seen the fur on the back of a dog stand up straight? This is another warning sign that the dog is not relaxed or happy.
6. Have you seen a dog lower himself to the floor and stare at you? He is getting into a position to jump at you. What if he rolls over and shows you his tummy? He is happy and he trusts you.

All of these body motions and sounds are ways that dogs communicate with us. We need to be very certain that we understand what the dog is trying to tell us. If we are not sure, we need to stay away from the dog.

How do we avoid getting bitten by a dog?

1. Stay away from dogs you don't know! Do not walk over to them.
2. Ask the owner if the dog is friendly. Ask the owner if you could pet the dog.
3. Offer your fist (not your fingers) to the dog to smell once you have permission to get close to a dog. (Demonstrate a fist with the thumb tucked inside.)
4. Remember a dog bites to protect his territory. Do not go into strangers' yards or up to cars to pet a dog that you don't know. That dog is on duty protecting his owner's house or car. If the dog is chained, he knows he can't run to protect himself so he is more likely to jump at you and bite.
5. Don't run past a strange dog. They may think you want to play. Walk slowly past a dog and do not look at him. (Demonstrate avoidance of eye contact) If you are on your bike and the dog is jumping at you, you could fall and hurt yourself. It is wise to get off and walk your bike past the dog. **Remember you cannot out-run or out-bike a dog so don't try!**
6. Do not bend over to pet a dog that is asleep, feeding her puppies or eating. Also, some dogs do not like to be touched on their head, ears or feet. The best place to pet a dog is under his chin. Do not put your face in the dog's face.
7. Some people have dogs just for protection so the dog is trained to growl and bark. Stay away from a guard dog.

If a dog starts to run at you or bites you, what should you do?

1. Stop and stand still. Cross your arms over your chest, putting your fists under your armpits. Do not look at the dog. Do not scream or run as this might scare the dog. Let him smell you and most of the time he will walk away. (Demonstrate this position)
2. If he starts to bite you, put anything you have in his mouth. Let him bite your bookbag, your books, a pencil, your hat, or your jacket.
3. If (**and only if**) a dog knocks you to the ground, get on your knees and bend over protecting your face and ears with your arms, and folding your arms behind your neck. This position also protects your heart and lungs. Stay in this position until the dog has left the area. (Have a student demonstrate this position)

4. If you can get into a car or climb a tree, this would keep you safe. If you can get behind a lawn chair or a fence, this would protect you.
5. **If you have a dog bite, get to water (hose, tub, sink) and wash with soap and water.** Tell an adult and try to remember what the dog looked like. You need to get medical care with a dog bite because the dog could have certain germs that could make you very ill.

We want you to understand a dog has thoughts and makes decisions to protect his owner, his property and himself. We want you to be safe and not do anything to a dog that would make him bite you. If you follow the rules about dog safety and tell your brothers, sisters and cousins, there will be fewer dog bites.

Reminder: (A review of appropriate care for pets) Think of how your mom makes sure you eat and drink enough every day to keep you healthy and strong. Please make sure you help to give your dog the food and fresh water that is necessary for his health. Your parents also take you to the doctor, a pediatrician, when you are sick or when you need the necessary shots to keep you healthy. Your dog has a special doctor, a veterinarian, who will help if your dog is sick or with the normal dog shots to keep your dog healthy.

Disclaimer:

The State of Nevada and WAAAHOO Productions do not guarantee that this video will prevent children from being bitten or attacked by their dog or other dogs. Dogs are animals and animal behavior is unpredictable. Children should be supervised at all times, around dogs, even the family pet. Children should be taught not to approach strange dogs.

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