

# TIPS FOR TRAINING

## To hug or not to hug. Knowing the Correct Answer May Prevent a Dog Bite

What do dogs want to tell us primates about hugs? Would they say they love it, or tell us to knock it off? The answer is clear since many children as well as adults get bit every year while hugging a dog. It is also clear that dogs are trying to communicate this through their body language. You may think your dog loves hugs, but in reality, she has probably learned to tolerate what you love.

If we are serious about reducing the thousands of injuries from being hugged, we must understand dogs better. Most children are not thinking about if a dog wants to be hugged or not, they are only thinking about a real-life stuffed animal. Most may even say their own dogs like hugs. Why wouldn't a dog like to be hugged were only trying to show affection. Dogs don't see it this way when we hug, we are invading their space and being inappropriate in their world. Many children get bit every day by dogs that are only trying to defend themselves and with most dogs there is usually communication to warn to back off before a bite. In fact, as primates we are the only species that like this kind of tactile. Dogs do not. You may say your dog does like it but in reality, they are only tolerating it. If you look at their body language while you are doing this, it will indicate discomfort. Kids see a dog as a stuffed animal and want to give them hugs and kisses. Dogs see kids as a threat when they are doing this and tragically often get bit. This can be prevented with kids learning a few rules

Does an angry dog ever wag his tail? (Yes)

Do dogs like to be kissed and hugged? (No)

If you know a dog, is it okay to reach through a car window or a fence to pet it? (No)

If a dog is chasing you, should you try to run away? (No)

Is it important to ask an owner for permission before you pet their dog? (Yes)

Is it important to ask your parent or guardian permission before you pet a strange dog? (Yes)

Should a strange dog be sitting before you pet them? (Yes)

Should you let your dog sniff your fist before petting? (Yes)

Is it okay to pet a dog on top of the head? (No)

Do dogs like to be petted on the side of the head? (Yes)

Is it okay to hit or yell at your dog if it doesn't listen to you? (No)

Should you approach a dog that is resting? (No)

Are there only certain breeds (or types) of dogs that bite? (No)

Do dogs use their body to tell you how they feel? (Yes)

Is a scared dog as dangerous as an angry dog? (Yes)

Should you approach a dog that is chained up? (No)