

Teach Your Child to Respect their Pets

Animals and humans share our space on Earth and sometimes even share our homes. And just like children, our pets depend on us for their every need. Therefore it is important children understand the importance of treating all living things with the respect they deserve, especially those we share our space with; our pets.

Preschool

It's important to teach young children the Do's and Don'ts of animal ownership, especially if your pet is a dog. Safety is an important factor around any animal.

Make sure they know the following:

- * Never approach a stray animal.
- * Ask the permission of the owner to pet an animal they see.
- * Allow an unfamiliar dog to smell their hand before petting.
- * Play around with a dog that is eating.
- * Not to take a bone, toy or other food essentials from a dog.
- * Not to tease an animal.
- * Not to run or scream from an approaching dog.
- * Always be gentle when talking to or playing with their pet.

Pets are your children's pals. Explain to them that treating an animal the same way they want to be treated is a good place to start. The animal has feelings and can be hurt just like another human being can. Therefore, pulling a dog's ears, or jumping on their back could hurt them just like they would hurt a human being.

Main points to address:

- * Teach your child to treat the animal the same way they would want to be treated.
- * Animals can get hurt too.

Grades K-3rd

The great thing about having animals is the fact that they can play and do fun tricks for the family. This would be a great way for children and animals to bond. It doesn't matter what type of animal you and your child has, every animal can be taught how to do tricks with the right knowledge and equipment. (See the links *tricks children can teach their animals)

Make sure your child understands to not get frustrated with the dog, if at first the dog does not get it, as this takes time. Make sure the dog has frequent breaks while being trained for bathroom, water and food. It's important if your child is training the dog that no one else attempts to train the dog as well, this will only confuse the dog, who will do much better with the consistency of one trainer.

Main points to address:

- * Have your child teach the animal tricks.
- * Make sure your child remains understanding and patient with the pet while he is training him.

Grades 4th-6th

Educate your children on a variety of animal behaviors and fun facts about animals. This is a great way for children to get to know their pets species better. Such as if you and your family own a dog that is a certain breed, like a bull dog which originated from the mastiff's breed. Research that breed of animal.

Children begin to have friends visit their home around this age group. Teach your child the importance of making their friends aware of the animal and the elements that the animal likes and dislikes. Such as; "my dog doesn't like people sneaking up behind him so be sure to stand where you can see him. EThis will help keep your animal feeling safe and will maintain a healthy environment for your children and their friends to play.

Main points to address:

- * Educate your children on pet behavior.
- * Talk to your children about making sure their friends who visit understand your pets behavior.