

# Train Your Kids Before Your Dog Does!

Dogs rarely do things for no reason. If your dog “suddenly and unprovoked” reacted towards a child, he felt he had a reason. Dogs are social creatures and therefore have strict social rules.

When a dog feels that they have to correct a litter mate (otherwise known as your child) they might tag them. This means that they’re telling a family member that they’re doing something wrong and should stop. Sometimes that something wrong is pulling a tail or grabbing something out of their mouth. Sometimes it is something that they shouldn’t be correcting anyone for, like wanting to sit on a couch or trying to walk through the kitchen with a pop tart. If your child is trying to ride your dog, your child might end up getting tagged with a correction. Unfortunately, for many dogs, people think it’s easier to remove the dog instead of taking steps to train the child.

It’s true, some instances warrant training the dog. (This usually also includes training the child.) If a dog has taken it upon themselves to train your children, this is where you should step in and train the children yourself. And show the dog that you are the one that trains the children...and trains the dog. It’s not a matter of “having to keep my child safe” from a dog. It’s “having to teach my child how to correctly interact with another species.” This is you providing your child with life skills.

Humans and dogs have a very long history and close relationship. But you have to remember that they are also animals. There are very few species that we invite into our homes and treat the same as we treat other humans. We forget that they’re dogs, not humans.

If your dog and your child have an “altercation,” your responsibility is to everyone involved. Your dog is your family, too. Finding out what you can do to help them get along, or to make sure that something like this doesn’t happen again can be a long and involved process, and you should definitely seek professional help. But don’t take the easy way out and just get rid of a family member. Imagine if that were the standard operating procedure for dealing with sibling rivalry in humans. You might be the one sitting in a small room wondering what happened.

*Written by Sheila of Integral Dog Training in collaboration with Animal Rescue Konnection (c) 2022.*