Dog Bites & Summertime

Dog bites, especially to children, increase during the summer. Teach your child how to safely interact with dogs and you may prevent a bite! Review the following with your child and have them practice items 12 & 13.

1. Stay away from strange dogs or dogs that are loose.
2. Ask permission before petting a dog, even if you know him. A dog you petted yesterday may not want to be petted today.
3. Don’t stare at a dog. Staring is threatening and may cause an aggressive response.
4. When a dog is tied up, leave him alone, even if it is a dog you know.
5. Respect your dog’s space. Leave him alone when he is sleeping, eating, in his kennel, on his bed, behind the fence or in a car.
6. Teach your dog a ‘give’ command rather than taking a toy or a bone out of his mouth.
7. Teach your dog how to take toys and treats with a ‘gentle’ command.
8. Don’t try to stop dogs that are fighting—find an adult.
9. Don’t tease or provoke dogs. A fake throw may cause a dog jump on you to get the toy. Pushing a dog may cause him to react with a growl or a bite.
10. Playing chase games is fun, until someone get knocked over or nipped. A dog doesn’t know when to stop chasing.
11. Fast movements and high-pitched squeals can freak a dog out. During kids’ playtime, make sure your dog is on a leash or safely contained.
12. Have your child practice curling up into a ball to act like a ‘rock’ to protect their face. Remember, rocks don’t move or make noise.
13. Never run away from a dog, because he will chase you. Slowly walk away sideways and do not make eye contact. Remember staring can make a dog uncomfortable.

Teaching your child how to treat dogs with respect may help prevent a scar that lasts a lifetime. Susan Jakobs, [www.wagitforward.com](http://www.wagitforward.com)