

Bite Inhibition

By Susan Carney

Playing with your puppy is not only a great bonding experience and exercise but it is a perfect time for training your pup to touch / bite human skin appropriately. Teaching bite inhibition, you first must remember that scolding a pup for every single bite is counter productive and will only make the biting worse. Also, remember that it is important for your pup to touch human skin and learn what to do when s/he feels it.

So, let's put the behavior on a scale from 1-5! One being a nibble or gumming of your hand that really doesn't bother you and five being a bite that makes you want to give your puppy up. ☺ To start, focus on the #5 bites only and every time it happens say, OUCH!, in a loud firm voice (when it happens), stand, step on the leash and stop play temporarily (about 10-30 seconds). Then, return to playing, try again. Each time your pup bites HARD say, "OUCH!" and stand up, remove yourself, the toy, your attention and everything the puppy likes. Don't bother with , "no, no, no" and do not touch!

If you are consistent, your pup will learn very quickly that you will not play and the fun stuff ends if they bite hard. There is nothing more rewarding than attention from you and they want it. Remember to target just the HARDEST BITE, NOT every single bite...teaching them how to play. Dogs play with their mouths naturally and it is important to let them. Do this for a few days or a week.

Ouch the softer bites

After a few days or a week (depending on the dog) you should be able to tell that the bites have changed and now get a bit softer bite Then we targeted the medium bites (# 4) in the same way. If you were consistent then you sent the message, "if you bite hard, All play and attention stop." Now your puppy should be avoiding both hard (# 5's) and medium (# 4's) hard bites altogether and resorting to softer ones.

Now we continue with the medium – soft (#3's) bites by doing the same...Start saying OUCH to those softer bites and continue to remove your attention for longer periods of time (30 seconds). Be sure to have a toy with you that will give your puppy an option for chewing...AVOID saying NO...just say, OUCH and stop playing then resume with the toy. If it is not working, start over and stop play for a bit longer, like a full minute. Remember it is OK and good to play with your puppy – all you are trying to teach here is gentle play without BITES. ☺

Rough play with Children

There are four simple rules to start when dealing with a puppy that plays rough with kids

1. Supervise all play sessions
2. Leave the leash on for control
3. Teach your kids to call out for a parent when things get rough
4. Always use and play with toys not just hands

Overall puppies treat small kids like littermates so to learn how rough is too rough your kids can be taught to say "OUCH" as taught above. Then leave the room and stopping the play will show your puppy that if they play rough, its over. The leash will give you the tools you need to prevent the pup from biting the child from behind or chasing after a child that has left. Simply stand on the leash, prevent the pup from following and count to 10 – 20. Sort of a time out. Let the puppy go and repeat the "confinement" a few times. If it does not work then the pup can go into its crate for about 5 – 10 minutes. Call if it does not seem to be working 603-772-2921 Ext. 112