

Dogs and Kids

If you are adding a four-legged member to your family, there are many good books about dogs and kids. Below are some hints and ideas from **Childproofing your Dog** By Brian Kilcommons and Sarah Wilson.

S.A.F.E.

First and foremost. Dogs and toddlers should never be left unsupervised. Even the most mellow dog will react when cornered by a child trying to measure the depth of the canine ear with a pencil. It is the parents' job to keep the dog and the child **S.A.F.E.**

Supervise

Keep them in your vision at all times or keep them physically separated, child in play pen or dog in crate. This means ALL times. From the stories we hear, problems occur when adult eyes are elsewhere. It is amazing how fast a dog and child can make mischief together! **WATCH THEM!**

Anticipate

A dog has only a few ways of protesting. He can hop up on the furniture, move away or go under a bed. Once he has done this he has no other way of stopping a child other than a bark, growl or nip. If you see the dog retreating from the child, stop the child! **Anticipate** problems before they happen. Do not expect your dog to tolerate something that you wouldn't.

Follow Through

If you say it, mean it. If you tell your child to stop bothering the dog, enforce that. If you tell the dog to sit, make him sit. **ALL** things are easier if your child and your dog know that you mean what you say and say what you mean.

Educate

This means child and dog. Teach your children by word and example that the animals are to be treated with care. Do not allow hitting, teasing, or other harassment. Teach your dog by practice and patience that most people- children especially, make mistakes and how to behave when mistakes are made.

If you keep both **S.A.F.E.**, you have taken steps to prevent the preventable.