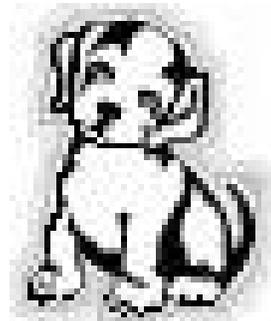


GROWING UP FRIENDLY

Puppies can be deceiving; while most are happy, friendly, lovable animals, not all of them stay that way. As they develop and mature, some begin to display aggressive behaviors, much to the dismay of their owners. Aggression can occur for many reasons, but it can also be prevented in most cases. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that puppies grow up to be friendly. Once an aggression pattern has been formed and reinforced, it can be difficult, time-consuming, and possibly dangerous to attempt treatment.

Prevention consists of three basic elements, the first of which is socialization. Experts agree that the primary method of socialization in dogs occurs between three and twenty weeks of age. This is a period of time during which a puppy should receive wide-ranging exposures to all types of people, places, and situations. Each exposure should be carefully arranged to be a positive experience for the puppy. Excessive or harsh punishment, traumatic experiences can even permanent impact on confidently with the world controlled exposures can but enrollment in a good provide precisely the needs to develop relations with people and



sudden frights, or other leave a long-lasting or a pup's ability to deal at large. Extensive, be difficult to arrange, puppy class can conditions a puppy confidence in his other dogs.

Leadership building for all adult family members is the second element. As puppies begin to mature, they instinctively begin to challenge an owner's authority in various ways. This, of course, leads to some aggravating situations – object stealing, chewing, failure to come when called, uncontrollable jumping, etc., but it can lead to something much worse, as well – aggression. Unless an owner knows how to effectively communicate with his dog, he may actually teach him (albeit inadvertently) to be aggressive. The answer, incidentally, is not to hit the dog for misbehavior; this, for a variety of reasons, usually creates

more problems than it ever solves. What an owner really wants is willing cooperation from his dog. Good obedience training is one way to accomplish this, but there are a variety of other methods that can be used in an owner's daily interactions with his dog. As an example, puppies can be taught very early to earn attention from owners by sitting on cue. A simple, non-confrontational technique such as this can prevent many serious aggression problems.

Troubleshooting is the third and final element. A well-socialized, obedient dog may still bite in very specific circumstances, if not adequately conditioned for such situations. Perhaps the classic example is the owner that goes out of his way to leave his dog alone while he is eating, feeling that this is the wise thing to do. Unfortunately, it is very common (and normal) for a dog to protect his food by growling when someone approaches, or by biting, if necessary.



Eventually, some unsuspecting person, perhaps a young child, is likely to reach for or just walk toward the food dish and be seriously bitten. It is incumbent upon the owner to teach the dog, at a very early stage, that it is acceptable and even rewarding to have someone approach and reach for the food dish. This is just one example of the troubleshooting that should be done. Dogs should also be conditioned to respond positively to having objects taken from their mouths, being grabbed, hugged, approached suddenly, etc. As part of a sound program, a good puppy class will teach the owner specific techniques for conditioning puppies to behave non-aggressively in a variety of situations.

One of the normal behaviors of a dog is to bite. However, it is clearly an unacceptable one from a human point of view. If we, as owners, expect dogs to exhibit friendly behaviors under conditions which, in the canine world, naturally elicit aggression, then we must teach them the acceptable human rules; they do not have the means of learning these things by themselves. It is up to us to ensure that our puppies grow up friendly.