**Why Dogs Bite: A Guideline for Children**

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**Excitement**

The noises and movements you make when you play are very exciting to dogs. When dogs play with other dogs, they often play roughly with their sharp teeth and claws. Sometimes dogs forget that they can’t play the same way with you, and because they don’t have hands, they use their mouths to grab things. A dog can hurt you by accident, just by being over excited.

**Pain or sickness**

When a dog is in pain, he doesn’t understand where the pain comes from. If you touch him, he may think you are causing the pain, and will bite you to stop the pain.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? If a dog is acting like he is sick or hurt, leave him alone, even if he belongs to your family. Tell an adult, and together you can get medical help for your dog.

**Anger**

A dog will protect anything that’s important to him. His toys, his bed, his food and water bowls, his people, his house, or car. If you come near something that a dog feels is off limits to you, he may bite to make to make you leave his” property” alone.

WHAT YOU SHOULD (OR SHOULD NOT) DO: Don’t go into the yard where there is a dog you don’t know. Don’t reach through a car window or a fence to pet a dog. Don’t touch a dog’s property.

**Fear or surprise**

Quick movements and sudden loud noises are scary for dogs, and they might bite to protect themselves. If a dog thinks you are a stranger who might hurt him, he may not know how to get away. So he will protect himself by biting.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO: When you are around a dog you don’t know, be quiet and move slow. Always ask the dog’s owner for permission before you pet him. If the owner isn’t there for you to ask , LEAVE THE DOG ALONE.

