

# Pet Seminar

Starting Off W/Right Paw

## AVOIDING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

by

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Any dog can be taught to be aggressive if it is not handled properly. Dogs are *pack animals* and the pack leader or "**alpha dog**" will be in control of the pack. Therefore, in order for you to be in control of your dog, ***you need to be the alpha dog*** and maintain that leadership position.

Your dog should **never** put its teeth on you or any other person. Licking i.e., giving you a "kiss" is fine; that is a submissive gesture. Never **hit** your dog! Dogs don't communicate with each other that way. You should make sure your dog is **not abused in any way**, and don't make excuses for a biting dog or puppy. Such behavior in your dog, if not corrected, can make him an unpredictable biter.

### To Avoid Biting Problems:

- ❖ Play only **passive** games (not "Tug of War") with dogs that have natural tendencies toward aggressive behavior.
- ❖ Wrestling is an unfair game to play with any dog – it **brings out aggression**.
- ❖ **If your dog becomes aggressive toward you or another family member**, put him in his crate/pen for "time out" and ignore him except for feeding and necessary bathroom exercise for a day or so depending on the severity of the incident.
- ❖ Be **smarter** than your dog! What was the last message you left in your dog's mind?
- ❖ Be quick to **correct all signs** of your dog trying to **control** you! For example: your dog demanding you to play with him or pet him, now! Play or petting should be on your terms, not his. This doesn't mean you can't pet him when he comes up to you, just not *every* time.
- ❖ Make your dog **defer** to YOU; i.e., wait for your instructions. For example: make him wait at the door until he is invited out *or* in. Have him sit or lie down when you bring out his food, and release him when you want him to eat.
- ❖ **Whenever** there is an encounter - you always win. Dogs are **gamblers**. Every time they win **increases** their confidence in their aggressive behavior. **You must win 10 out of 10 times.**
- ❖ Plan ahead. **Avoid** getting into confrontational situations.
- ❖ Teach your dog proper obedience commands and **consistently** enforce them.

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