

The ABC's of Dog Safety & Respect

By Barbara Shumannfang, Author of [Happy Kids, Happy Dogs](#)

Ask permission.

Ask, "May I pet your dog?" before you touch a dog. Even if you know the dog and even if the dog looks friendly. It is respectful to ask before touching others. No one around to ask? Don't touch.

Be a tree.

Next, stand still with arms at your side. If the dog does not come closer, do not touch. If the dog comes close to you, then the best place to pet is the chin or chest, not the head or back.

Chin or chest is where you should pet.

Do not hold your hand out toward his nose (the dog can already smell you). Do not hug or kiss a dog. These can scare a dog and lead to a bite, today or over time. If the dog comes close to you, stroke under the chin or on the chest. If he doesn't come close, count his spots or admire his collar, but don't touch.

If any dog, even your dog, has something in his mouth, leave him alone. Do not move closer or try to pet him. If you need help, ask a grown-up. If a dog, even your dog, is lying down, whether sleeping or just resting, leave him alone. Do not move closer or try to pet him.

If a dog comes running up to you, pretend to be a tree, tall, still and quiet. Don't run or scream. That can excite the dog, leading to a bite. Stand still, look at your shoes, and be quiet. Most dogs lose interest and move along. When the dog is gone, back away and go tell an adult what happened.

Adults should model these ABC's for kids. They should also never leave an infant or child unattended with a dog.

For more information on how kids and dogs can be safe and happy together, read: *Happy Kids, Happy Dogs: Building a Friendship Right from the Start* by Barbara Shumannfang. Available anywhere books are sold and at your local library. Visit www.veryfetching.com

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