

The benefits of having a dog in the family...

Studies show that children who own pets have higher self esteem, improved social skills and are more popular with their peers. Pet ownership can create a number of positive opportunities for children to:

- develop a sense of responsibility
- care and nurture others
- establish a daily exercise routine
- develop friendships.

Pet ownership also can be beneficial for family harmony and communication.



Train the dog to sit, stay, drop and come

For more information contact the following organisations:

The Safety Centre

Royal Children's Hospital
Flemington Road
Parkville 3052

Telephone (03) 9345 5085
Facsimile (03) 9345 5086

The Petcare Information and Advisory Service

Toll Free 1800 631 784
www.petnet.com.au

The Petcare Information and Advisory Service can assist with choosing a breed of dog that will suit your lifestyle and needs.



Your responsibilities as a dog owner...

As a dog owner you have a number of responsibilities:

- register the dog with the local council
- ensure the dog is kept in your yard
- take responsibility for any damage the dog has caused
- leash your dog in public places
- in public your dog must always be under your control.

There can be some differences of the law per state and local authority. Some councils have set aside special areas for unleashed dogs. Check with your local council for details.



Exercise daily

Responsible dog owners should also...

- exercise the dog daily
- have the dog desexed if it is not intended for breeding
- ensure all vaccinations, worming and health schedules are adhered to.



Model the desired behaviour

Reduce dog bites by...

- always supervising children near dogs
- teaching children how to behave toward dogs (as explained in this brochure)
- ensuring your dog is properly trained to sit, stay, drop and come
- choosing a breed that is suited to your families' lifestyle and environment
- make sure your dog is friendly with children
- show children how to behave with dogs
- seek professional advice about socialisation of dogs and children.

Teach your child to...

- always ask permission from the owner before slowly approaching an unfamiliar dog
- curl your fingers and allow the dog to sniff the back of your hand
- stroke the dog gently on the chest, or shoulder, or under the chin
- avoid approaching dogs that are sleeping or eating
- stand still like a fence post if approached by a strange dog and not squeal or jump
- avoid eye contact with the dog by looking at your own feet.

Teach children that a dog should be left alone if it...

- lifts its lips
- growls
- backs away
- raises the hair on its back
- stares at you



Stand still if approached by a strange dog