

Education Helps Dogs and Children Speak the Same Language.

Education programs that help us live more safely with dogs work to reduce the occurrence of dog bites in children. National Dog Bite Prevention Week is a time to focus on the success of those programs and encourage continued use of education programs to preserve the human-canine bond well into the future.

Amenia, NY (PR Web) May 16, 2011 -- While the complexity of human-canine interactions sometimes leads to interspecies miscommunication, the overwhelming majority of the 78.2 million dogs now living in this country never harm anyone. The National Canine Research Council (<http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com>), committed to preserving the human-canine bond, marks 2011 National Dog Bite Prevention Week by reflecting on the successes of programs that help us live safely with dogs. The enrichment dogs bring to our lives far outweighs the relatively low risk of injury, and a continued focus on education programs will reduce that risk even further.

Such programs have already paid welcomed dividends. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports “a significant change in the rate of occurrence” of dog bites from 1994 to 2003, during which time the rate for children bitten by dogs decreased by 47%, from 24.5 per 1000 in 1994 to 13.1 per 1000 in 2003. Not only did the rate of reported bites to children decrease during that decade, but the number of children receiving care from a medical professional for dog bites also decreased significantly. This occurred while child visits to healthcare providers for other causes of injury were not decreasing.

When a dog does bite, we should attempt to understand how and why the dog responded as it did.

Jennifer Shryock is founder of Dogs & Storks (<http://www.dogandbabyinfo.net>), a national program that advises families on bringing a new baby into the home. She is also a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC) who specializes in dog and child safety and fun. “Dogs and children have very different ways of communicating,” says Shryock, “and children often attempt to communicate with dogs the same way they would with another person unless they are taught otherwise. These differences in communication, and the misunderstanding that can result, are one of the reasons supervision must be a priority when children and dogs share a home.”

Dogs perform a variety of important functions in our society. The vast majority of dogs are companions, the physical and emotional benefits of which are well-documented in the scientific literature. Many dogs, in addition to offering us their companionship, perform practical and important work in our communities: in law enforcement, in our hospitals and libraries, in providing assistance to the disabled, and as our partners in sports. Nor should we forget the 2,700 dogs on active duty in the American military.

During National Dog Bite Prevention Week, organizations nationwide are offering advice and educational resources to help children and adults. NCRC urges Americans of all ages to take advantage of those resources, so that we continue to live companionably with the 78.2 million dogs in our midst and so we preserve the human-canine bond well into the future.

The National Canine Research Council (<http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com>) is committed to preserving the human-canine bond. NCRC publishes, underwrites, and reprints documented, reliable research to promote a better understanding of our relationship with dogs.

Jennifer Shryock is a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant who specializes in safety and harmony between children and dogs. She is the founder of Dogs & Storks (<http://www.dogandbabyinfo.net>), a national program dedicated to helping parents safely integrate babies and dogs. Dogs & Storks has been featured in publications such as the *Wall Street Journal* and *Dog Fancy Magazine* on child/dog related topics. Jennifer has been a regular guest on many radio programs.