

A Dog's Eye View For Dog Bite Prevention

Reports of dog bites by public health agencies have fallen to historic lows across the United States. Even the U.S. Postal Service has seen a nationwide decline in bites to its letter carriers, from over seven thousand in 1983, to less than three thousand five hundred in 2007.

Slanesville, WV ([PRWEB](#)) May 22, 2009 -- The [National Canine Research Council](#) says that when we see ourselves through our dog's eyes, the number of these already infrequent incidents will fall even further.

It is clear that our desire for companionship with dogs is strong. Dog ownership in America has increased significantly since the 1980's. The American Pet Products Association estimates that there are now 74+ million dogs in the United States. Forty percent of all American households have at least one dog living either inside the home or elsewhere on the premises. Household spending on pet products has continued to rise, according to the APPA, even during the current recession.

Dogs can give unconditional affection. They are safe to confide in and pleasing to the eye. They make us laugh and help us relax.

Do we do enough to support their adjustment to our busy lives?

"Often we do nothing, or we do inappropriate things," says [Karen Delise](#), NCRC Director of Research. "We purchase or adopt a dog and expect them to automatically adjust to our chaotic life, while failing to recognize that dogs need guidance, attention and affection. Without our assistance our canine companions may have a difficult time meeting our expectations and can become stressed and confused"

Some studies of [dog bite](#) incidents draw a distinction between bites that are provoked and those that are unprovoked. A review of the literature reveals that there is little agreement as to how to define these two terms.

Delise and others suggest that attempting to draw a distinction based on those terms may be misleading.

"My research and investigation into 45 years of incidents of dog bite injuries has convinced me that a situation we understand as non-threatening, may be perceived quite differently by our dog," says Delise. "When we say a bite is 'unprovoked,' we mean 'I do not understand why the dog reacted as he did.'"

Dogs are incredibly tolerant of humans and usually communicate their stress, fear or discomfort without biting. Their level of stress can reach the point where there is a nip or single bite. Serious attacks by dogs are rare and are usually the end result of a series of [problematic human](#) and canine behaviors.

The overwhelming majority of dog owners consider their dogs members of the family. The NCRC recommends that, not only should we train our dogs in what we expect from them, we should return the favor of a dog's companionship by seeing things from his point of view. Get to know your dog, spend time with him, train him, stimulate and exercise him, and develop a bond with him. In situations that may be unfamiliar, keep control of him and try to understand his reactions.

Good sense advice for dog owners is readily available. The NCRC recommends that dog owners take advantage of the resources available in their community to improve the quality of their dog's life, and of their life with



their dog.

About Karen Delise/The National Canine Research Council

Karen Delise is the Founder and Director of Research for the National Canine Research Council and the author of

"The Pit Bull Placebo: The Media, Myths and Politics of Canine Aggression". (Anubis Publishing)

She can be reached at [kdelise @ ncr council.com](mailto:kdelise@ncrcouncil.com).

The National Canine Research Council publishes well-documented, reliable research to improve the lives of dogs and the communities in which they live.

On the web at: www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com

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**Contact Information****Karen Delise**

National Canine Research Council

<http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com>

304.496.1225

Donald Cleary

National Canine Research Council

<http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com>

973.699.3573

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