

The ABC's of Dog Safety

Ask permission.

Ask "May I pet your dog?" before you touch a dog. Even if you know the dog, or even if it's a breed you like.

Be a tree.

Stand still with arms at your side. If the dog does not come closer, do not touch. If the dog comes up to you on his own, then the safest place to pet is the chin or chest.

Chin or chest is where you should pet.

Do not hug or kiss a dog or reach your hand toward his nose. Those can scare a dog and lead to a bite. The dog can smell you just fine. If the dog comes close to you, stroke gently 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 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 then go tell an adult what happened.

For more information on how kids and their 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. For more safety tips visit www.topnotchdog.com.

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