



# Public Information

City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services  
221 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 500, Los Angeles, California 90012 / [www.LAAnimalServices.com](http://www.LAAnimalServices.com)

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## For Immediate Release

June 9, 2011

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## Kids & Dogs – Making Best Friends

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It is often said that the dog is man's best friend. With a little thoughtful training, a dog can become a child's best friend, too.

To give your kids, your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews this incredible gift of unconditional love and acceptance with a canine best friend, spend time in the beginning teaching your dog and youngster how to safely interact and enjoy each other.

Know your dog. Few dogs are natural "nannies" and reliable baby sitters like the Newfoundland. Start out by always being present when the child is getting to know the family dog, and don't leave the child and dog alone until you are sure both know how to safely interact. The child must understand not to take favorite toys or food from the dog, and they need to understand that sleeping dogs should be allowed to rest. If the dog has a crate, explain to the child that the crate is the dog's safe den and is not a place to play. Show the child how to gently pet the dog.

For safety, teach your child not to run and scream around your dog or other dogs. This could be a signal for the dog to play a chase game. Most dogs enjoy a fast-paced game involving chasing, growling and tumbling with each other. Play for a dog may be too rough for a child.

Practice having your child act like a tree standing very still with arms by her side, not moving, or acting like a rock by curling up on the ground face down with hands over the ears. Ask your child to act like a tree or a rock if your dog or any dog seems to be trying to play too rough. This is the safest way to avert a potentially dangerous situation.

When you are out with a child and you see a dog on a leash on the street, model appropriate behavior for the youngster by asking if you can pet the dog before you go right up to the person. If the handler says that it is okay, ask if the dog likes children. If the dog does not like or know children, don't try to get to know this dog.

By taking a careful and caring approach to training your child and your dog, you will teach your child to safely play with friendly dogs. Best of all, you will give the child the opportunity to experience unconditional love and acceptance at its finest.

The mission of the Los Angeles Department of Animal Services is to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of animals and people. Call us at 1-888-452LA-PET1/1-888-452-7381 (TTY Hearing impaired: 877-875-8205) or visit the website at [www.LAAnimalServices.com](http://www.LAAnimalServices.com) to learn more.

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