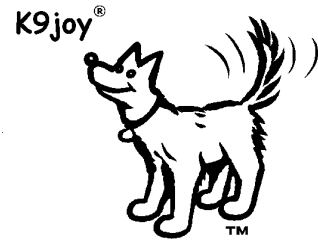




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SEMINAR/WORKSHOP:

"KIDS GOING TO THE DOGS"

Overall frame:

Two sessions of about 2-2½ hours each, last session with dogs, split into two separate groups. Maximum 20 participants. Handout materials in binder.

Who can participate:

Participants must be at least 8 years of age, preferably 10 or above.

The kid participating with dog must be physically capable of controlling the dog, otherwise a parent must assist in the practical part.

Dogs must be brought along with an ordinary buckle collar - no choke chains or harnesses will be allowed.

All kids bring the dog's favorite toy and favorite treats for the practical sessions.

Objective:

To give the participating kids a fundamental understanding of what a dog is, and what its fundamental nature is, so they can respect and enjoy dogs with a minimum risk for themselves and the dogs, and with maximum enjoyment for all parties involved, including the parents.

To support the kids in dealing with their own dog as well as with other people's dogs, in a safe and mutually rewarding way.



Content:

- The history of dogs' relationship with people - the cave man and the wolf. What dogs have been used for by man. How we can still see a lot of the dog's carnivore nature in its behavior, especially in play. The dog pack and how dogs bond to other pack members. How humans become pack members. Greeting for bonding - how dogs do it and how we can imitate it when greeting our dogs.
- Live demonstration of how to approach a strange dog and do a correct, non-threatening greeting of it (all participants to practice on instructor's dog).
- Warning signal's from the dog's side - when to know if it likes what you do and when to stop because the dog is discomforted or fearful. Understanding the dog's threat signals, its avoidance signals, and its signals of antipathy. Responding correctly in a friendly way to its signals of submission and play invitations.
- How to give a dog a treat without getting bitten and without threatening the dog (live demonstration with all participants on instructor's dog).
- The do's and don'ts about dealing with dogs, both your own and other people's dogs. Safety first!
- Presentation of participants' own dogs and how they greet them, play with them, and take care of them.
- Live greeting of the other participants' dogs, emphasizing friendliness and non-threatening behavior.

Good reasons for letting your kid participate in this seminar/workshop...

In the movies and on TV, dogs are most often shown as being excellent companions for kids, sometimes even to the degree of kids being given responsibility for a dog that is larger than themselves. Many parents give in on the kids' constant asking for a dog, often with the positive intention of having the kids learn to deal responsibly with an animal. However, owning a dog involves far more than this....

It is our experience that most accidents between kids and dogs happen because kids and dogs do not always understand each other very well. Dogs cannot learn to speak English and they will use their own body language to communicate with the kids. If the kids do not understand this Dog Language, miscommunication is the inevitable result - and all too often, the kid will hurt the dog, or the dog will feel compelled to defend itself with more serious means in order to stop what it perceives as aggression from the kid's side....

Parents and kids should understand that the dog is a *domesticated wolf* - regardless its cute and friendly appearance, developed through generations of



breeding. Although wolves are *hunters*, they are also *pack animals* with a strong ability to integrate into a family. However, without respecting the nature of our dogs, our use of them as “pets” can become a dangerous game, for our kids as well as for the dogs.

We want all kids and parents to know the fundamentals of Dog Language. Kids should know when it is safe to approach a strange dog and when not. The dog’s body signals will tell this! Kids should also know how they are to approach and greet a dog, without instilling fear or aggression in the dog - and this involves some behavior that is exactly the opposite of what most kids naturally do!

Finally, it is important that kids know what to expect from the dog’s side - what its natural responses all mean. We think kids need to know what it means when the dog licks them, what it means that it turns its bum to them, what growling means, what staring means, what smiling (=showing teeth!) means, how the dog shows fear, what a wagging tail indicates, how you can tell the difference between play and aggression, why dogs bark, and so on....

We believe that when kids know this, most accidents with dogs can be completely avoided. We also believe that this can lead to both dogs and kids enjoying each other far more - and for the parents to have peace of mind letting them.

What you and your kid get out of this seminar/workshop:

After this seminar/workshop, the participating kids should know how to deal safely with the dogs they meet - and with your own dog. They should know the basics of Dog Language so that they are able to communicate friendliness and non-aggression to any dog, and they should be able to recognize situations where encounter is not advisable.

As a parent for a kid that participates in this seminar/workshop, you will get professional support in achieving your goal of teaching your kids to deal responsibly with dogs, respecting their nature, and having the maximum fun out of the relationship - in a safe way.

What your dog will get out of it:

Your dog will get exposure to other kids greeting it in a peaceful way. For a timid or rambunctious dog, this can help the dog getting along more easily with other kids also. Best of all, of course, will be that the dog will enjoy being around your own kid to a much larger degree, based on its feeling more confident and its enhanced trust in the kid, now the kid has learned to communicate more adequately with the dog.