How to prevent dog attacks in the home

The problem:

• Most serious dog attacks (resulting in hospitalisation) occur in the home.
• Children under 5 years are the group most at risk of dog attack, followed by children 5-9 years.
• Children are more likely to be hospitalised due to dog attack than due to a car accident.
• Most children are bitten by their own dog, or by a dog they know, when playing with, patting or feeding it.

The solution:

• Active supervision is the key. Never leave young children (particularly children under 5 years of age) alone with dogs.
• Train and socialise your dog. Understand a little about dog behaviour.
• Don’t allow children to play roughly, tease or corner dogs, or hug dogs around the neck.
• Teach kids the warning signs of a frightened or angry dog, and what to do if confronted by an aggressive dog (see the card “How to prevent dog attacks in the community”).
• Teach kids when to leave dogs alone. eg when dogs are asleep, feeding, unwell, with pups, tied up, not with owner, in a car, behind a fence/gate.
Don’ts for dogs

Don’t tease
Don’t disturb when sick
Don’t approach angry dogs
Don’t cuddle face to face
Don’t disturb when sleeping
Don’t disturb when feeding
Don’t approach frightened dogs
Don’t allow dogs near parties
Don’t disturb when with pups
Don’t climb on fences

For more information, visit www.vic.gov.au/pets

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