

## PUPPY NIPPING AND ROUGH PLAY

The goals of working with puppy nipping is to redirect your puppy's desire to put something in her mouth, such as an acceptable chew toy, and to teach her that putting her teeth on human skin is never acceptable. When puppies play appropriately with each other they can learn bite inhibition and proper social skills with other dogs.

### **Encourage Acceptable Behaviour**

Redirect your puppy's inclination for nipping and biting by offering her more acceptable objects (such as chew toys) whenever you pet her. This technique can be especially effective when children want to pet her. As you or the child reaches out to scratch her behind the ears with one hand, offer the chew toy with the other. It's very difficult for children under eight or nine years old to practice the kind of behaviour modification outlined here, adults should closely monitor all interactions between their children and dogs.

### **Discourage Unacceptable Behaviour**

You must also teach your puppy to be gentle with hands, and show her that nipping results in unpleasant consequences. Teach your puppy that nipping "turns off" any attention and social interaction with you. As soon as a nip occurs, look your puppy right in the eye and yell "OUCH" as though you've been mortally wounded. Then ignore her until she's calm, and then try the chew toy and petting method again. Owners, who cannot inhibit the nipping with a yelp, could consider a shake can or squirt of water, as soon as the biting becomes excessive. Another option is to get up and walk away, you may need to leave the room and shut the door if necessary. **Never** use physical punishment (such as: like slapping the puppy under the chin or forcefully holding the mouth closed) that involves some level of discomfort or even pain which may end in a bite.

### **Jumping Up**

Remember she wants attention from you – even if you push her off, look at her, talk to or pet her she is still getting what she wants! Instead:

- Completely ignore her (you can try turning your back to her without making eye contact)
- Continue to ignore her until all four paws are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat. If she knows the "sit" command, give the command when all four paws are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat while she's in the seated position.
- If she begins to jump while you're praising her, simply turn away and repeat the steps above. Remember to keep your praise low key and always be consistent.
- Be careful not to ignore her when she comes and sits politely, waiting for your attention.

### **What Not to Do**

Attempts to tap, slap, or hit your puppy in the face for nipping or jumping up should never be used. Several things may happen, depending on your puppy's temperament and the severity of the correction:

- She could become hand shy and cringe or cower whenever a hand comes toward her head.
- She could become afraid of you, and refuse to come to you or approach you at all.
- She could respond in a defensive manner and attempt to bite you to defend herself.
- She could interpret a mild slap as an invitation to play, causing her to become more excited and even more likely to nip.