

PLAY BITING.

Puppies play with each other, and their toys, using their mouths/teeth, their front feet, and sometimes their back feet. That's how they have FUN! with each other. However, it ceases to be FUN! for us when sharp puppy teeth either puncture, rip or bruise our skin.

When puppies play with each other and one gets hurt, the hurt puppy will squeal out, run away and quit playing. Now, to his dismay, the hurting puppy has no one with which to play. This is how puppies learn bite inhibition - it's best not to bite so hard that you hurt your playmate.

When the puppy begins play biting, it is important that you do not swat at, swing at, push at, flail your hands around or otherwise try to get the puppy away from you, as he will think you are playing back and usually enthusiastically come back for more FUN!. This now makes you a moving target.

As most puppies might see younger children in the household in a subordinate social position than they are, telling children to correct the dog in any manner may be a big mistake, as the puppy may elect to regain control of his higher social position by making a stronger correction toward the child.

Rather, the child, and all adults in the family, should scream out loudly, from the slightest touch of the puppy's teeth on their skin, quit playing and depart from the room. Now the puppy has lost his human playmate and is learning bite inhibition and also that people's skin is much more tender than that of a puppy, so he must be more careful.

Another method that may be used is to redirect the puppy's attention toward another more sturdy, chewable object, like a bone or toy.

Play biting is natural for puppies, but learning not to nibble people is a learned behavior.

The Humane Society offers three Puppy & Dog Training Classes each week—Wednesday at 11 AM, Thursday at 7 PM and Saturday at 1 PM. The class is a 6-week session; each once-a-week class is about 1 hour. For information contact Connie at 772-388-3331, Ext. 19.