



Dog Safety for Kids

Be a Dog Detective

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[Dog Detective](#)



Dogs give lots of clues about how they are feeling if we only know what to look for. You can have lots of fun being a dog detective and looking for clues about how a dog might be feeling.

Dogs have feelings and they can be happy, sad, worried, wanting to play or wanting to be left alone, just like you do. It is never a good idea to go up to a strange dog, so no matter how happy or friendly a strange dog seems, just ignore him and [be a tree](#) if he comes close or bothers you.

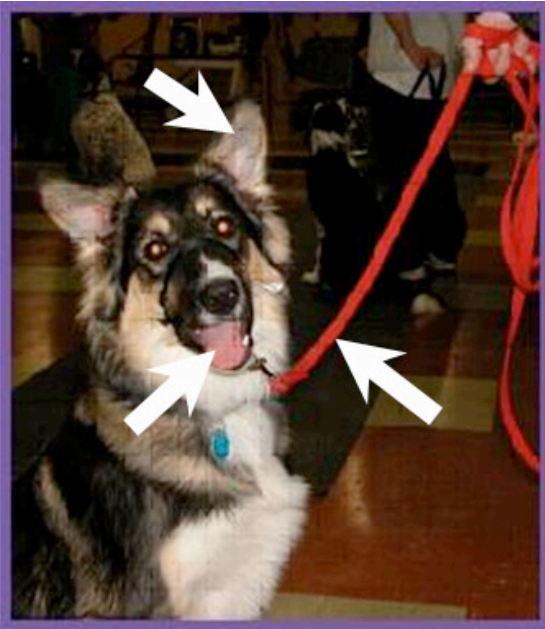
You probably have friends or family with dogs and maybe you even have a dog of your own. Even these dogs that you know well may not want to play or be petted sometimes. You can tell how the dog is feeling by his body language. If a dog is happy then he may want to meet you or interact with you, if he is not feeling happy, then he would rather be left him alone.

Sometimes dogs want to be petted and sometimes they don't. You might like to have a good night cuddle with a parent, but you certainly wouldn't want your parent to run out onto the soccer field or the dance class in the middle of a practice and give you a big hug, would you? There is a time and a place for interacting with dogs as well. They don't like to get hugs and kisses, but sometimes they want to sit and be petted or to play and sometimes they don't.

Here are some photos that show the same dog presenting 2 different emotions, with arrows pointing to the body part clues that show whether he is happy and relaxed or not. A dog that is happy and panting and wagging his tail may want to interact with you. If he closes his mouth and looks serious as you approach, then he has changed his mind. It is better to leave him alone and let him come to you if he decides he wants to be near you. Remember, we are talking about dogs that you know. Be sure a parent is around to supervise and give permission to approach the dog. Ignore strange dogs even if they do seem friendly.

You may notice that sometimes the arrow points to a tight or loose leash rather than a body part. A tight leash tells you that the dog is not relaxed. Stay away from a dog on a tight leash!





Hello, nice to meet you



Please go away



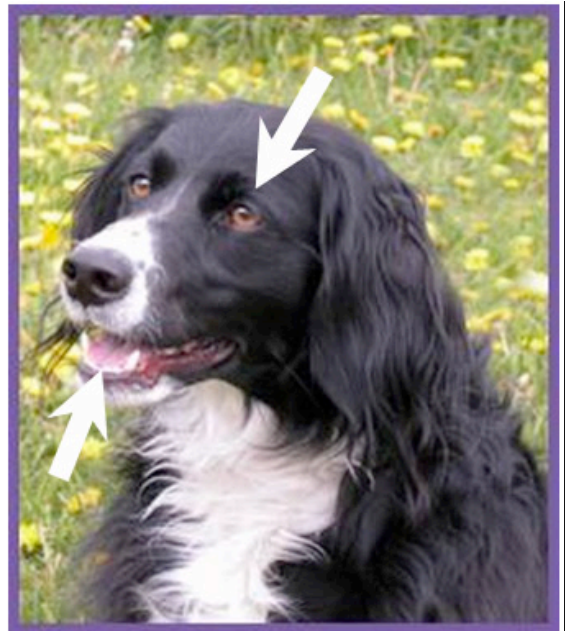
I'm the boss



Let's be friends



I'm worried, stay away



I like you

The most important clue is the mouth. If the dog is panting and looks happy, then he is most likely feeling relaxed. If he looks worried or interested in something and his mouth is closed then he is not relaxed and happy and he does not want you to touch or play with him right now.



Be Doggone Smart

Learn to speak dog and teach others.

Pet only happy dogs. Ask permission.

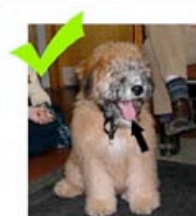
Learn how to Be a Tree so a dog goes away.



Relaxed, paw tucked.



Mouth closed, intense, warning expression



Relaxed, happy dog.

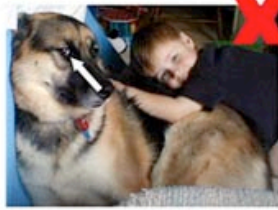


Mouth closed, tail up, intense expression.

Dogs communicate with body language. Be a Dog Detective. Look for clues that tell you how the dog is feeling before petting any dog, even your own dog or dogs that you know.



Dog detectives know that none of these dogs are happy to see you, they all want to be left alone.



Dogs don't like hugs and kisses from kids. They may tolerate this, they may not.

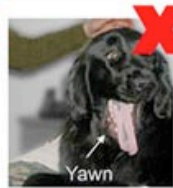
This is a major cause of facial bites to children by the family dog.



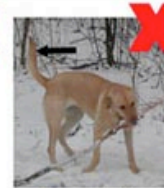
Paw lift



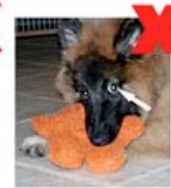
Nose lick



Yawn



Raised tail



Half-moon eye

For more information ... www.be-a-tree.com ... 877-350-3232



[Click here to download a copy of the postcard shown above](#)

There are more photos to look at which compare the same dog showing different emotions. The photos with the red borders are dogs that want to be left alone. See if you can see the clues that tell why the photo has a red border or a green border.

[Click here to see these photos](#)

Do you want to find out more about being a Dog Detective and try out some of the things you have learned? [Visit with real-life dog detective](#), 7-year old Kayleigh and find out what she has to tell you. Check back every month or so for updates.

For more information about dog body language and more advanced information about how dogs communicate with all their body parts [click here](#) and ask your parents to go over this information with you.

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