



# Underdog

## Underdog Training & Behaviour Consulting

### When Freddy Meets Fido: A first in preventing problems with dogs and children.

We are all aware of the problems that can occur between dogs and children. There are many physical and psychological injuries associated with dog bites every year and some frightening statistics suggest that the offending dog is often the family pet. Some of these interactions have resulted in the tragic death of newborn babies. Alarmed? Don't be. The good news is that many of these incidents are preventable through good training and socialisation- of the human family as well as the dog!

We've all heard the saying prevention is better than cure. Nothing could be more accurate when it comes to children and dogs. If you are thinking of starting a family or already pregnant and have a dog in the family, consider the following questions and tips below:

- Has your dog been exposed to children before? Is your dog relaxed in the presence of children of different ages and activity levels?
- Has your dog been in the presence of a crying baby and/ or a crawling toddler?
- How will your dog's routine change with the arrival of a new baby?
- Will the dog be restricted to certain areas of the house or become an outside dog?
- Are you prepared to closely supervise your dog and child?
- Does your dog have unwanted behaviours like jumping up and/ or mouthing that could prove problematic either during your pregnancy or with a newborn baby?
- Do you know how to respond to your dog if they behave inappropriately in the presence of your child?
- Have you considered your child and someone else's dog AND your dog and someone else's child?
- How will you introduce your new baby to the dog when you come home from the hospital?

What can you do now? Consider changing your routine regularly now so that your dog does not have expectations that are set in stone. Think about what you will and won't be able to do when you have a baby- will the dog be receiving less stimulation and interaction? Training exercises in the home can be used to tire an active dog and utilising dog walking or day care services can be helpful in some situations. Supervision is vital- a dog should never be left alone with a child, regardless of size, breed or personality.

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