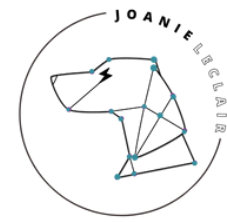


Understanding and Managing Puppy Biting



Teaching bite inhibition is an essential step in raising a puppy. This process requires patience, consistency, and kindness, as each puppy progresses at their own pace.

A NORMAL BEHAVIOR TO GUIDE WITH KINDNESS

Biting is a normal and predictable behavior in puppies. It's a temporary phase (phew!) related to their physical, emotional, and cognitive development. When properly managed, this behavior naturally decreases with maturity and learning.

WHY DO PUPPIES BITE?

Sensory Exploration

Puppies use their mouths to explore their environment, just as human babies use their hands. It's a normal way of discovering objects, textures, and interacting with humans and other dogs.

Teething

Between 2 and 6 months, puppies lose their baby teeth and their adult teeth start to come in. This period can cause discomfort, leading to an increased need to chew to relieve their gums.

Overstimulation or Fatigue

A puppy in a state of excitement or fatigue may have more difficulty managing their impulses, often leading to uncontrolled biting.

Seeking Interaction

Biting can also be a way for the puppy to seek attention: they want a reaction or to engage in interaction. If biting leads to movement, shouting, or play, it can unintentionally reinforce the behavior.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR MANAGING BITING



Redirect to Appropriate Objects

- Offer a variety of chew toys: different textures, frozen toys, interactive toys (e.g., Kong).
- If the puppy starts nibbling on you, gently interrupt the interaction and offer a toy in exchange.



Teach Bite Inhibition

- When playing with your puppy, immediately stop the game if they bite too hard (even briefly).
- Resume the game only when the puppy has calmed down or is using their mouth gently.

Good Practices for Managing Biting (continued)

PSST!

It can be helpful to implement a time-out period if the puppy gets too intense with their biting. This allows them to quickly learn that if they play too rough with their teeth, the game stops, and they no longer get attention.



Managing Moments of Overstimulation

- Watch for signs of fatigue or restlessness.
- Offer regular rest periods (in the crate or a calm area).
- Opt for calm games or training exercises to channel their mental energy.



Reinforcing Calm Behaviors

- Praise and reward moments when the puppy is calm and using their toys.
- Don't hesitate to use long-lasting chew treats to encourage relaxation.

What to Avoid

- Physically or verbally punishing: this can lead to fear, aggression, or a breakdown of the trust bond.
- Using your hands as toys: this teaches the puppy that biting skin is an acceptable game.

For a normally socialized puppy, with access to appropriate interactions and consistent guidance:

- Biting gradually decreases between **4 and 6 months**.
- It is replaced by calmer behaviors, especially if their physical, cognitive, and social needs are met.

Clear, consistent, and respectful guidance will help your puppy successfully navigate this phase—while building a lasting relationship of trust and cooperation with you.