

the Dog Listener

Video Discussion Guide

by AKC Public Education



The American Kennel Club (AKC) believes every child should be taught how to behave safely around dogs. Understanding a dog's mood, actions and body language will help children avoid dangerous situations.

With this in the mind, the AKC has created The Dog Listener educational program for children. This free program contains an [online video](#) and [handouts](#) that teach children how to properly greet a dog, what to do when they see a loose dog and how to understand a dog's body language.

Before the video

Explain to children that this video will focus on how to take cues from a dog's behavior and determine how to safely interact with them.

Use the following questions to see what the children already know about this topic.

- Do you have dogs at home?
- How many of you are afraid of dogs?
- What made you afraid of dogs?

Explain that today children will learn:

- How to greet a dog when its owner is present.
- What to do when you see a loose dog or multiple loose dogs.
- How to take cues from a dog's behavior to know if they are friendly or unfriendly.
- How to be safe around dogs.

Discussion Questions

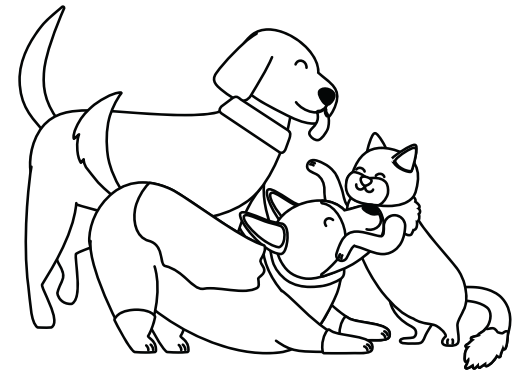
Ask the following questions after watching the video:

- **Dogs are territorial. What does "territorial" mean?** *It means that a dog will defend its home, yard and what it perceives as its area against what it sees as intruders.*
- **Do we approach dogs when they are in their territory without their owner present?** *No. Dogs can feel threatened and may bark to tell you to back away.*

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Discussion Questions continued

- **How do we greet dogs who are with their owners?** *Approach slowly and let the dog sniff the back of your hand. After the dog has sniffed your hand and become familiar with you, pet it gently under the chin or on the chest.*
- **Why is important to not rush up to a dog?** *You don't want to scare them.*
- **What do you do when you see a loose dog?** *Don't run towards the dog or away from it. Keep still and back away slowly. Then, tell an adult you know about it. An adult will help to identify the dog and its owner.*

- **What should you do if you encounter an unfriendly loose dog?** *You should "Make like a tree". Stand still, arms crossed over your chest, and don't make eye contact.*
- **How should you behave if you see a group of loose dogs?** *Don't stare or throw things at them. Distract them by tossing an object (like your hat or backpack) away from you. The dogs should move toward the object, giving you the chance to slowly turn and walk away.*
- **Is it true that there are mean breeds and nice breeds?** *No.*
- **In the video, they mentioned the phrase "It's the deed, not the breed". What does this mean?**

It means that what the dog does is more important than what breed he is.

- **How were the children in the video able to tell that Maggie's dog, Angus, was friendly?** *He had an excited bark, he ran up to the children and sniffed them, he brought them a ball to play.*

After the video discussion, review that you should act the same around dogs you know and dogs you don't know. Use the [Dog Listener Activity Book](#) to reinforce information learned from the [Dog Listener video](#).