

PICK OF THE LITTER



DOG TRAINING

PLAY BITING/MOUTHING

During the first six months of life, a puppy is constantly losing old teeth and growing in new ones. This inevitably causes pain, just as it would in a teething child. Dogs often relieve this pain by chewing on any item that is available to them. The problem occurs when the puppy begins to chew on items that are inappropriate, such as your hands and feet. Puppies find this to be a very rewarding way to learn about the world because it provides relief of the pain associated with teething and it is a great way to get your attention.

Not to worry though, mouthiness is not related to aggression or dominance and is seen in the large majority of puppies. It is simply the puppy learning about the world in a manner that is inappropriate in human terms. To teach your puppy that mouthiness is inappropriate, it is recommended that every dog owner teach "Bite Inhibition". Bite inhibition is something that is learned over time and the mouthing behavior often decreases as the teething pain lessons.

Teaching "Bite Inhibition"

- **Playtime Toys:** Have ample toys available whenever you interact with your puppy. Take away these toys and place them out of reach when playtime is over.
- **Withdraw Playtime:** During playtime, take the toy away from your puppy whenever the biting begins. In other words, the moment your puppies teeth come in contact with human skin, stop playtime, for just a moment. When your puppy stops biting, return the toy and begin playtime again.
- **Withdraw Attention:** If your puppy continues to bite despite withdrawing the toy, simply stand up, remove yourself from your puppies reach and even leave the room if necessary.
- **Chew Items Available At All Times:** Try stuffing a Kong with peanut butter, yogurt, canned dog food, cheese, etc. (the Kong can be frozen and even hidden throughout the house or yard). Rope toys can be dampened and frozen for a fun treat. Bully sticks, ice cubes, greenies, and Nylabones are other great chew items for puppies.
- **Teach your Dog to "Leave It":** Hold a food treat in your closed fist and allow your dog to investigate the treat in your hand. Use the command "leave it" and wait for your dog to back away from your hand. Immediately give him a treat from your other hand. Eventually you can use this command when your puppy is biting as a calm request to stop.
- **Ask for a Better Behavior:** Ask for your dog to "sit" anytime he or she approaches you for attention.