

Understanding Puppy Behaviour

Puppies use their mouths to explore the world, communicate, and play. Not all biting or snapping means a puppy is aggressive.



Puppies are learning and depend on us ♥

Common Normal Puppy Behaviours

- Mouthing during play
- Nipping while teething
- Chasing moving hands or feet
- Barking or growling during excitement
- Guarding toys temporarily during development



These behaviours can usually be managed with training, supervision, and guidance.

Play
Explore
Learn
Grow ♥

What Is Snapping?

Snapping is a quick air bite or warning movement with the mouth. Puppies may snap when they feel:

- Frightened
- Overwhelmed
- Startled
- Painful or uncomfortable
- Frustrated
- Protective of food or toys
- Tired or overstimulated



A snap is often a warning signal that the puppy is struggling to cope with a situation.

It's a warning, not bad behaviour ♥

Common Causes of Puppy Aggression or Snapping

- Fear or anxiety
- Overstimulation
- Teething pain
- Resource guarding
- Frustration
- Pain or illness



Understand the reason, find the solution ♥

Fear or Anxiety

- May react defensively if:
- Approached too quickly
 - Cornered
 - Handled roughly
 - Unfamiliar situations
 - Punished harshly

Signs of fear:

- Cowering, tail tucked, lip licking, trembling, avoiding eye contact, growling.



Overstimulation

Can become overwhelmed when overtired or overexcited.

Common signs:

- Zooming around
- Sudden biting
- Difficulty calming
- Barking excessively
- Grabbing clothing

Often means they need sleep.



Teething Pain

Puppies naturally chew and bite more while teething.

Can cause:

- Irritability
- Increased chewing
- Sensitivity around the mouth
- Frustration during handling.



Resource Guarding

Some puppies protect food, toys, beds or stolen items.

Warning signs:

- Freezing over an item
- Growling when approached
- Stiff body posture
- Snapping if someone reaches toward the object.

Can worsen if items are taken away forcibly.



Frustration

May react when prevented from doing what they want.

Examples:

- Being restrained
- Unable to reach another dog
- Lack of exercise
- Excessive confinement



Pain or Illness

A puppy in pain may snap unexpectedly.

Possible causes:

- Injury
- Ear infections
- Dental pain
- Digestive upset
- Orthopaedic issues.



Any sudden behaviour change should be assessed by a veterinarian.

Warning Signs That Should Not Be Ignored

Seek professional guidance if your puppy:

- Repeatedly growls at family members
- Bites hard enough to break skin
- Guards food or toys intensely
- Lunges without warning
- Cannot calm down after excitement
- Shows aggression around handling
- Appears fearful much of the time
- Targets children aggressively.

Early intervention is important.



Notice the signs get support ♥

What TO Do

Stay Calm

- Pause the interaction
- Give space
- Assess the trigger
- Redirect calmly.

Use Positive Reinforcement

- Reward calm behaviour
- Treats, praise, toys, attention.

Teach Bite Inhibition

- Stop play after painful bites
- Redirect to toys
- Reward gentle interaction
- Keep play calm and structured.

Manage the Environment

- Use baby gates
- Supervise closely
- Remove high-value items
- Provide regular naps
- Offer enrichment toys.

Support Rest and Routine

- Frequent naps
- Predictable routines
- Quiet downtime
- Calm environments.

Calm guidance brings brighter futures ♥

Helping Children Interact Safely

Children and puppies should always be supervised together.

Teach children to:

- Avoid hugging
- Leave them alone while eating or sleeping
- Use calm voices
- Stop if the puppy walks away.
- Never tease or chase.

Many bites happen when warning signs are missed.



Kind kids create confident dogs ♥

When To Seek Professional Help

Contact a veterinarian or qualified trainer if:

- Aggression increases over time
- Bites frequently
- Family members feel unsafe
- Guards resources intensely
- Fearful behaviour is severe
- Training progress stalls.

A veterinary behaviourist may be recommended for complex cases.

Sometimes you may need to seek multiple opinions. The first opinion may not always be the right opinion.



It's okay to ask for help ♥

Building Confidence in Your Puppy

Confident puppies are less likely to react aggressively.

Build confidence by:

- Creating positive experiences
- Introducing new things gradually
- Rewarding calm behaviour
- Avoiding punishment
- Allowing choice and space
- Keeping training predictable and fair.

Trust and safety are the foundation of good behaviour.



Confident puppies happier lives ♥

Key Reminder

Aggressive behaviour in puppies is often communication, not "badness" or stubbornness. A puppy that snaps or growls is usually telling you they are:

- Uncomfortable
- Frightened
- Overwhelmed
- In pain
- Overstimulated
- Unsure what to do.

Responding calmly, safely, and consistently gives your puppy the best chance to learn appropriate behaviour and feel secure in your home. Remember they are communicating with you.

Listen Learn Support Their future depends on you ♥

