

# Biting Puppies!

## Why they do it

- Explore their world with their mouths
- Natural litter play- biting and playing rough
- Is a dog's fail- safe mechanism, preventing them from being injured.
- Puppies learn that biting hurts when playing with each other- then their next play will be softer.

## Biting needs to be curbed early!

- Should never play roughly with puppies in a physical manner! They can continue this into adulthood which is less fun when they are big and have adult teeth. Especially with children. It can be hard to make them stop once they get excited. And though dogs are allowed to react when startled- we don't want their reaction to be a biting one.

## How we guide them to not bite

- Always redirect/distract with toys they are allowed to chew. Can push a toy into their mouth and continue playing
- To do this→ make sure you have lots of toys. Kongs, chew sticks, ropes
- Never punish. Using positive punishment (ie adding something aversive/unpleasant) a slap, verbal aggression acts to give them attention- so you're reinforcing this behaviour. Can reduce the bond between you both. Can lead to retaliation with aggression.
- Positive praise- when they are playing correctly. Reward the behaviour you want to see- when calm, not biting.

## Teach puppy to 'Leave it'

- Good way is to teach to 'leave it'. Can do with both food and/or toys
  - 1) Have food in a closed hand→ puppy will sniff, try to get to it. They lose interest→ as soon as this happens give reward. Can then add in command- 'leave it'. So puppies learn if they stop bugging/biting, they will get a reward.
  - 2) Can do this with a toy. Tug of war is a great game. After playing can say 'leave it' and stop playing with it and just hold onto the toy. They will continue to chew and try and play with it for 30 seconds or so until they lose interest. As they do this and back off- give reward. Verbal command 'leave it' again.
- Licking instead of biting is a good sign you're on the right track.
- If puppy is hyperactive, non-responsive to commands etc, they are over their threshold for learning. Put them in time out until they are calm, or try at a later stage.