

STEPS TO AVOID PUPPY MOUTHING

Here are some suggestions from the Pet Education Center of the Michigan Humane Society regarding Puppy Mouthing/Play-Biting ...

- ❖ Avoid putting your hands (toes, etc.) near your puppy's mouth or playing with the pup with your hands.
- ❖ Play with an appropriate toy. This can be a ball, stuffed animal, squeaky toy, rope, or any other toy that your dog likes and you approve of as a chew toy.
- ❖ If your puppy puts her mouth on you (EVEN IF IT DOESN'T HURT) or grabs your clothes, give a loud, high pitched "yelp" or "ouch!" Make sure it is loud enough to distract the puppy and make her let go.
- ❖ As soon as the puppy is distracted (i.e. lets go of your fingers) IMMEDIATELY encourage the pup to play with her toy.
- ❖ Should your puppy decide to grab your hand (foot, shirt) again, give a loud "ouch!" and redirect the pup's attention to the toy.
- ❖ Give lots of praise when the pup has the toy in her mouth instead of your hand.
- ❖ For persistent mouthers, when the puppy latches on to your hand give a loud "ouch" and walk away, ignoring the pup. Ignoring means:
 - Don't pet your pup
 - Don't lecture your pup
 - Don't punish your pup
 - Don't talk to your pup
 - Don't even look at your pup

A couple of things that this sheet from MHS does not mention that I picked up from the trainer in puppy kindergarten....

When you are ignoring, stand up straight, fold your arms and turn your back on the dog if you can ... if puppy is firmly attached to your clothes, you may need to gently release their jaw from your garment, then adopt the ignore position.

Puppy will probably jockey around to get back into your line of vision so, you may need to turn around several times ... pups are smart and most of all they want your attention. They figure it out pretty fast especially if YOU are consistent and firm.

The very second puppy sits, lets go or give attention to a toy instead. GIVE BIG PRAISE.

We also add a "No Bite!" after the "OUCH"

Also your puppies are teething big time now ... so make sure they have lots of good stuff to chew. One trick is to dampen old, clean washcloths – I have a bunch of cheapo ones I got at Sam's Club just for this purpose, twist them into a rope and freeze them. Give one to your puppy to gnaw on every few hours (supervised of course!) to help cool those tender gums!

Hang in there and REMEMBER, you're in charge!