

Parental Guidance Differences between Kids and Dogs

It's vital to understand how parenting dogs and giving them guidance compares to kids. Kids and dogs have many similar needs when it comes to parental guidance. They both need supervision and intervention to prevent injuries. They both need to clearly understand what is or isn't allowed and to have a confident parent they trust and respect to protect all family members. How you meet those needs, though, is very different for kids than for dogs. The chart below helps outline *why*:

Kids	Dogs
Larger “timing” window of opportunity for understanding guidance.	Very limited “timing” window of opportunity for understanding guidance. Must be “at the moment” an emotion or behavior is happening.
Can understand verbal guidance addressing past, present, and future emotions and behaviors.	Can only understand a few words of guidance that instantaneously coincide with the emotion or behavior.
Physically less agile with slower reaction times, exposed skin, and no or dull teeth.	Physically agile with faster reaction times, skin covered with fur or hair (with a few exceptions), and a set of knives in their mouth.
Can continue to grow intellectually, gain wisdom, and master self-control and will require less and less supervision and intervention when playing with others.	Can develop some self-control and gain some wisdom but will remain a two-year-old in modern family life. Will continue to require some supervision and possibly intervention when playing with others.
Can understand some subtle guidance and expanded explanations.	Can only understand “black-and-white, yes-or-no” guidance.

