

Rottweiler Puppy is Very Aggressive

Try changing your disciplinary approach, or return him to the breeder.

By September Morn

Q. I have a 9-week-old male Rottweiler puppy who is extremely aggressive. We got him when he was 7 weeks old. The first few days, he was very calm and submissive. But he has started growling when we take a bone away from him, pick him up, or kiss his head. Whenever he displays any aggression, I immediately yell "No" and hold him down on the ground, on his back until he calms down. I called the breeder and explained the situation, and she suggested putting a choke collar on him and pulling it when he's aggressive.

My family has two wonderful Rottweilers, who are very calm and sweet. I realize that Rottweilers are tough to train but none of us have ever seen a puppy aggressive like this.

I'm seriously considering taking him back to the breeder. I don't want to do that but I'm not going live with an aggressive Rottweiler that could hurt someone. What do you suggest we do?

A. The behavior you've described does sound like it may be a bit over-the-top for a 9-week-old puppy. Seven weeks is quite young for a pup to leave his mama and littermates, but that alone would not cause this degree of bossiness and irritability. However, adding your own aggression to the puppy's by flipping him over and holding him down or by jerking on a choke collar is probably making matters worse. Nine weeks is certainly too young for a choke collar, and yanking on it to punish him could cause serious permanent injuries to your puppy. Attempting to control the puppy's behavior using force and violence will only make him fight back harder and will not create a bond of trust between you.

Ask your veterinarian to refer you to a trainer or behaviorist who can assess your pup's behavior and teach you more dog-friendly methods for changing his behavior. You already have two Rottweilers, so you probably realize this pup's behavior is out of normal range for his age. Though he could be trained to modify his behavior, his basic temperament may be more aggressive than you'd want in a companion pet. Discuss this with your veterinarian, trainer, or behaviorist to see what he or she recommends.

If you decide that both you and the pup would be better off if you returned him to his breeder, then go ahead and do that. If the breeder is responsible and reputable, she will take back this pup if you ask her to.