

## Physicians Say Don't Leave Children with Dogs

**Pediatrician also calls for mandatory dog training classes for owners.**

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Children should not be left alone to play with dogs, according to a paper published in the current edition of the British Medical Journal.

In the paper, doctors also call for children to be taught how to approach dogs and say that dog owners should face mandatory classes on pet control.

Hospital admissions for dog bites have doubled in 10 years in the United Kingdom. Also, figures show that 4,133 people were admitted to hospitals suffering dog bites throughout the country in 2006, almost double the number in 1996. More than 20 percent were children under nine.

"Most dog bites to children at home happen when the child interacts with the dog in the absence of adult supervision," pediatrician Rachel Besser wrote.

"We must stop placing blame on the dogs themselves and focus attention instead on who holds the lead at the other end – or who isn't holding the lead as the case may be. It is clear that not all dog owners appreciate that children should not be left unsupervised with a dog."

Besser also suggested that dog training classes be compulsory for new owners.

"Just as some parents are obliged to take parenting classes, I would like to see equivalent mandatory classes for expectant dog owners to teach them about the responsibilities of dog ownership," she wrote.

She also called for measures targeted at children to help educate them on how to approach dogs.