

# Educating Children for Dogs: Accessing schools

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# Ireland dog facts

- 49% of Irish households have at least 1 dog
- Unlike most of western Europe dogs still outnumber cats as preferred pet by as much as 3 times
- Number of dogs in Ireland : best average 750,000
- Greatest concentration in Urban conurbations and East coast

# The benefits of dog ownership for children

- **Health**
- Building immune system.
- Pet ownership was significantly associated with better school attendance rates
- Autism
- Obesity & exercise
- positive interaction with dogs has also been proven to speed up the patient recovery process.
- presence of animals in institutional settings creates a more homely and less intimidating atmosphere ( Peata & Therapy dogs )

# Social Benefits of dog ownership

- **Social benefits**
- Children in dog owning families also have more traditional values, better academic achievement and greater respect for their parents.
- increased reading ability when child reads to dog
- non- judgemental
- **Social confidence**
- dog ownership exerts a protective influence on the behaviour: reduced vandalism and gang membership, drugs and crime
- research shows that pets help single children develop greater empathy, higher self-esteem, and increased participation in social and physical activities.

# Dogs and children : disadvantages

## Zoonoses: transmittable diseases from dog

### **Insect bites**

- Lyme disease
- Dirofilaria immitis (Dog heartworm)
- Leishmania

### **Aerosol**

- Bordetella bronchiseptica
- Coxiella burnetii

### **Contaminated urine**

- Leptospirosis

### **Contaminated dog food**

- Salmonella

### **Direct contact**

- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus

### **Infectious saliva-**

Rabies Pasteurella-  
Capnocytophaga  
Brucella

### **Faecal transmission**

- Salmonella
- Campylobacter
- Giardia lamblia
- Toxocara canis
- Ancylostoma caninum
- Echinococcus
- Dipylidium caninum
- Drug-resistant bacteria

# Dogs and children : disadvantages

## Zoonoses: The solution

### **Dog**

- Regular health checks with vet
- Requires regular worming
- Regular flea and tick treatments

### **Children**

- Teaching children to wash hands
- Teaching owners to pick up droppings

**Biggest disadvantage : DOG BITES**

# Dog bites in Ireland

- Overall Numbers not known because many minor bites not reported
- **But** severe bites causing 1 day or more stay in hospital :
- average 160 per year of which 120 will be to children
- 80% of children will be under 10 years
- 80% will be boys

## Location of bite

- 90% of bites to Children are to face and head : leads to scarring
- Most dog bites are by family or friend's dog ie known by child.
- Generally single bite
- At home or leisure areas
- In summer & during hot weather

# Ireland: comparison

Ireland has a hospital discharge rate, due to dog bite, substantially higher than countries with similar populations.

Country	Hospital discharges per 100,000 dogs	Hospital discharges per 1 million people
Ireland	29	50
Sweden	Not known	28
Netherlands	14.6	14

Why should the rates be significantly higher in Ireland , especially when the majority of bites are to children, from, largely, dogs that are known to the victim ?

Social and cultural attitudes..... or a lack of education on dog issues ?

**Most bites are preventable**



# Dog bites

- 3 scenarios where most bites occur :
- Waking up the dog suddenly
- Approaching when resource guarding (food or toys)
- Ignoring / not understanding the warning signals
- All 3 can be avoided though training and education

# Dog bite prevention

## History of IKC involvement

- Printed media in IKC magazine
- Focused on dog bite prevention
- Handouts at public events eg Pet Expo's
- But only piecemeal / individual approach



# IKC response

## **Initial proposals**

- Visiting schools
- With dogs

## **Objections**

- Requires volunteers in area
- Dogs which have been tested and passed as suitable
- Insurance
- Consent required by principals and parents for students to attend ( health or religious issues)

# Access to schools : Volunteers

- All Volunteers required to be vetted and certified by Police under child protection scheme
- National coverage difficult to achieve
- Small rural schools difficult to visit
- Unlikely to visit all schools in same year

# Technical solution

- Schools in Ireland have technology in the classroom



- Provide Teachers with the information
- Downloads of educational material programme from IKC website
- Presentation in MS and Mac versions
- Teacher's notes, break out material and games

# School Trial

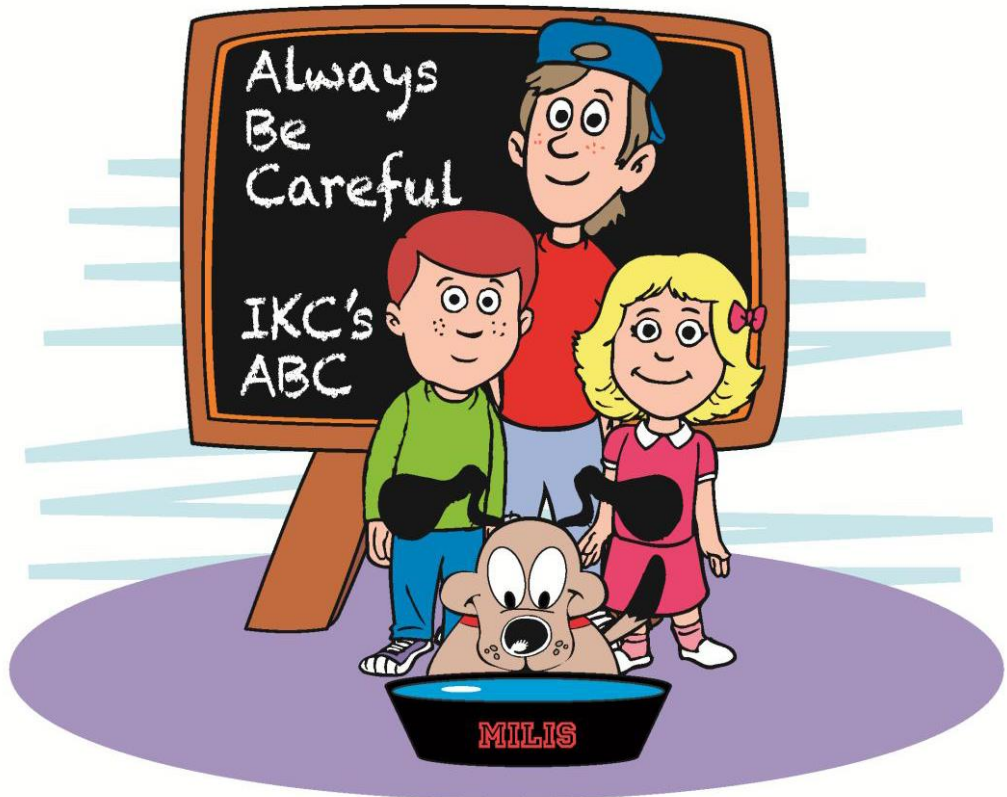
- Trialled in National Primary Schools
- Feedback / Results

# IKC ABC scheme

**A**lways

**B**e

**C**areful



Know your ABC's: Dogs and child safety  
An educational programme for Schools from the Irish Kennel Club

- With the kindness of the Lithuanian Kennel Club the IKC has used their presentation with additional material .
- A lesson plan is included
- This material is open ended scenarios so that discussions can take place
- They are intended to reinforce the lessons from the Lithuanian KC material
- Presenter notes suggest possible points for discussion



# Teacher notes

## Lesson Plan - Dog Bite Prevention

IKC ABC programme

### Lesson Plan -Always be Careful : Dog Bite Prevention

**Topic:** Dog facts and child safety / dog bite prevention

**Grade Level:** National Primary School

**Objective:** Children will learn about the social requirements and needs of a pet dog, the various roles they perform .Children will become familiar with the different ways dogs communicate. Children will learn the appropriate way to approach a dog. Children will learn the appropriate actions to take if they are approached by a stray or loose dog.Children will learn safety and hygiene around dogs

**Materials:**

- Keynote (mac) and PowerPoint (Microsoft) presentation with Presenter notes
- Teachers notes
- Maze Game
- Flip card game
- 

**Procedure:**

**Key points for the lesson include the following and can be integrated with the presentation at various points as each teacher feels appropriate to their class , ability and knowledge .**

**Communication**

Ask children how they can let others know what they are thinking and feeling. Usual responses will include "tell them", "write to them", "body language" and "facial expression". You may choose to have some volunteers communicate different emotional states non-verbally to the rest of the class (e.g., happy, sad, angry, scared, surprised).Note that there are similarities between these modes of communication and some of the ways in which dogs communicate.

Ask students how dogs may communicate "verbally"; ask how do dogs talk.

Dogs can bark or growl in different ways to communicate different things. One kind of bark may mean "I'm hungry", another "I need to go out", yet another "I want to play", and yet another "there's danger".

Growling, a deep, throaty "grrrr", is the way a dog lets others know to stay away and leave him alone. Often the dog is protecting a treasure such as food, bones or rawhide toys from being taken away.

A growl is a warning that the dog will bite if you don't leave him alone. Most dogs will stop growling if you move away from them and leave them alone.

Ask students about what they think they need to look for in a dog's body posture to determine what they are trying to communicate. At this point, pictures or individual slides can be used for illustrations.

**Mouth:** Is the mouth relaxed or is the dog showing his teeth?

**Eyes:** Are the pupils dilated? This (together with other information may mean that the dog is suspicious, angry, or scared.

**Ears:** Are the ears standing up (alert, bossy), slightly back (relaxed, submissive), plastered back against her head (frightened, ready to be defensive)?

**Tail:** Is his tail standing up but not wagging (alert, suspicious, bossy), standing up stiffly wagging (excited, bossy), relaxed wagging (happy, friendly), tucked between his legs (scared, "If you don't stay away, I may bite")?

This is the perfect opportunity to explicitly point out that a wagging tail does not always mean a friendly dog. How the tail is wagging (e.g., stiff v. relaxed) together with other verbal and nonverbal information need to be considered.

**Body Posture:** Is she leaning toward you (dominant) or leaning away from you (submissive)?

**Hair:** Is the hair on his back and/or shoulders standing up (suspicious, angry, "stay away")?

**How do I approach a dog?**

Ask your students what things they think they should consider when deciding whether or not to approach a dog. They will likely suggest aspects of their communication. Reinforce these responses and add the following:

**IS THE DOG WITH SOMEONE?**

1. Never approach a dog that is tied to anything.
2. Never approach a dog that is alone.
3. Never approach a dog that is behind a fence.
4. Never approach a dog that is off leash.

**IF THE DOG IS WITH HIS PERSON, ASK THE PERSON ON THE OTHER END OF THE LEASH?**

1. Is your dog friendly?
2. May I pet him/her?

**DOES THE DOG LOOK LIKE SHE WANTS TO BE PETTED?**

Remember dog body language -- what is the dog saying?

**ASK THE DOG**

1. Never approach a dog without letting it see and smell you first.
2. Slowly extend your relaxed closed hand (not clenched fist) for the dog to sniff and watch how the dog responds.
3. Even if the person with the dog says it's ok you always need to ask the dog.
4. After you see that the dog wants to be petted (remember dog body language) then gently stroke the dog on the side or back of the body .
5. Never make your first stroke on the top of the head.
6. Never touch a dog from behind, you may startle him -- even your own dog

**What if a stray dog approaches me?**

1. Make believe you're a tree and don't move.
2. Never run - even if the dog is jumping and barking at you. Remember dogs like to chase moving things.
3. Don't scream -- even if the dog is jumping and barking at you. Dogs have sensitive hearing and this could get them excited or scared.
4. Don't stare into the dog's eyes. In dog body language, this could be like asking a dog to fight. Instead, look at the dog's tail so you can still see what she is doing. Keep your eyes cast down and take quick short glances at the dog.
5. Back away slowly, one step at a time until you reach safety.
6. Even if a dog is injured don't try to touch him -- an injured dog is scared and in pain and is more likely to bite you.
7. You can help a stray or injured dog by getting an adult that you know and trust and together you can call you local animal shelter or humane society for help.

**Demonstration:**

Call up student volunteers to role-play meeting a dog that is accompanied by a person. Use a dog toy

# Body Language



Bark / Growl / Snarl



Shy / Afraid  
(Tail between legs,  
head low, crouching)



Fur raised, ears up,  
tail up (often over the back),  
stiff body.



Eager / Playful / Friendly



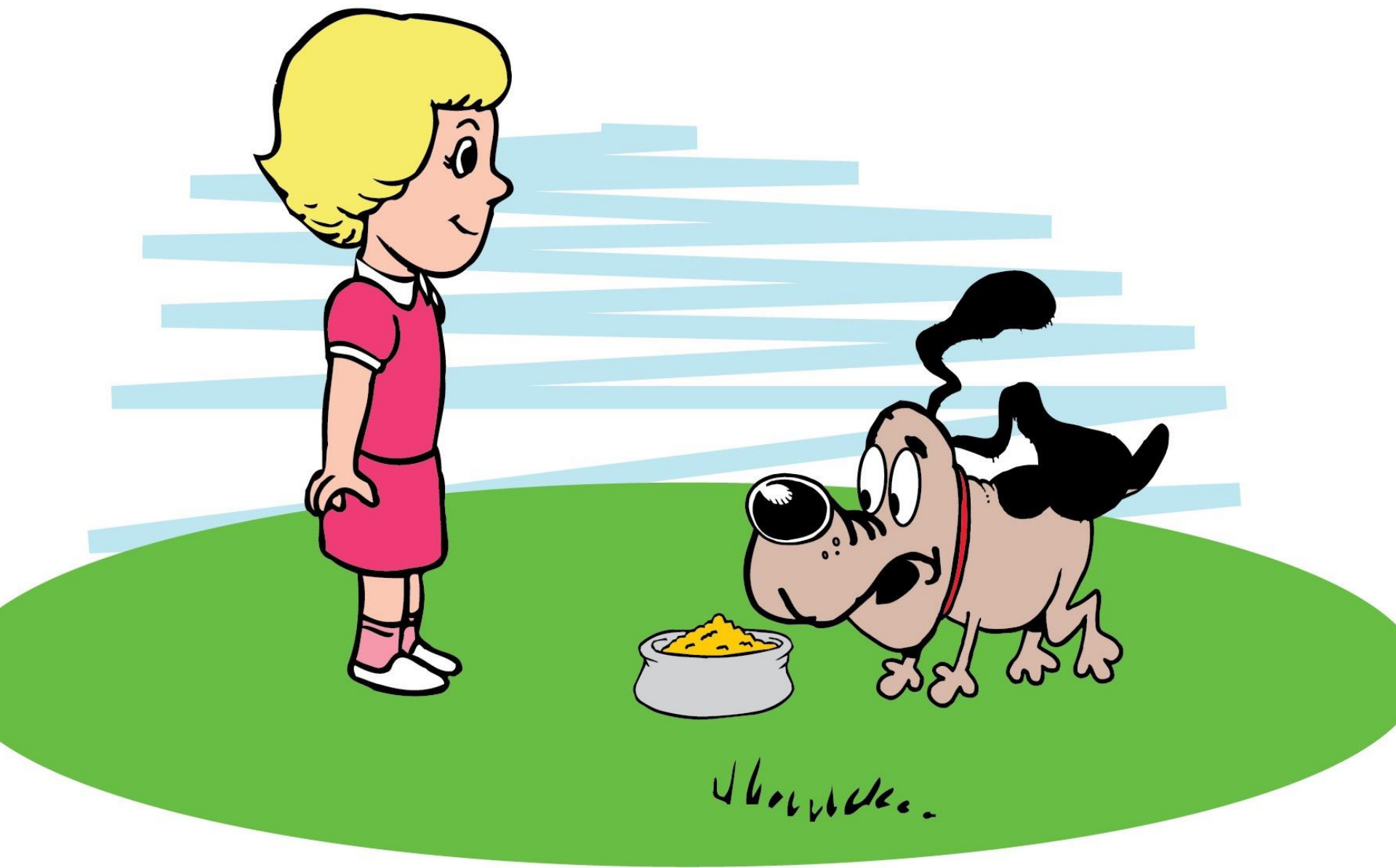
Crying / Hurt / In pain

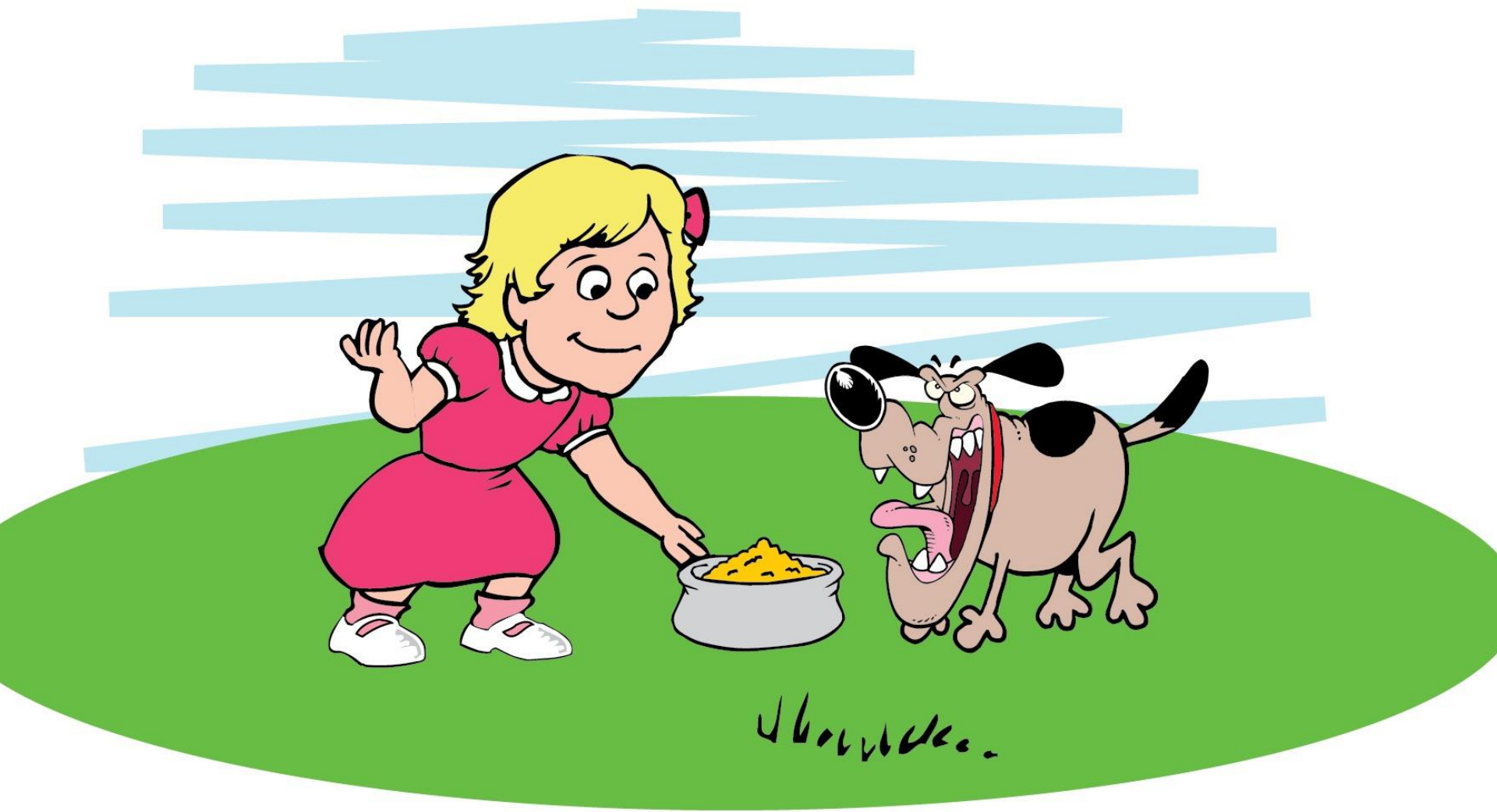


Wagging Tail





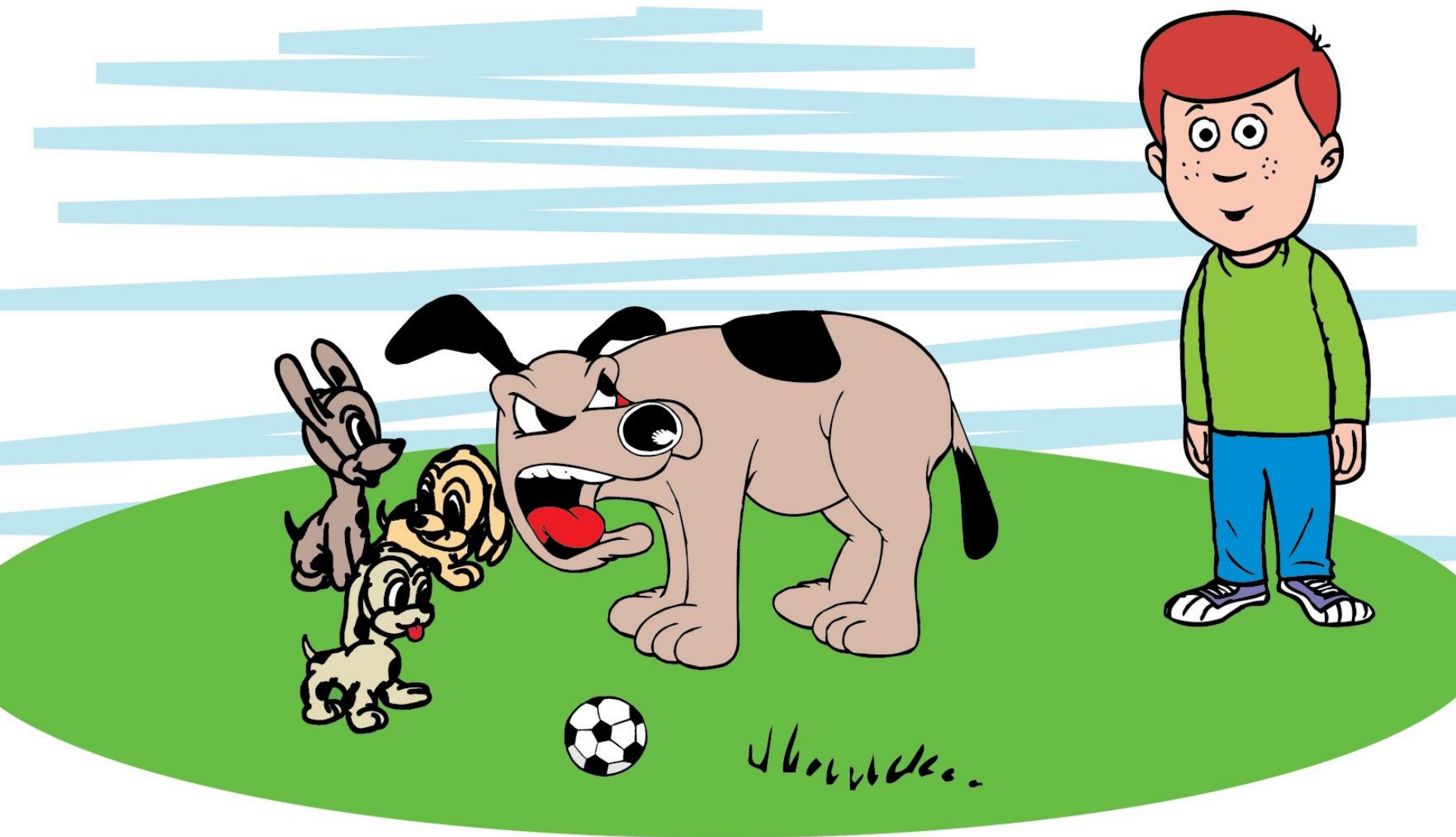




Убавувааа...









# How to say Hello



**Hi, Can I pet your dog please?**



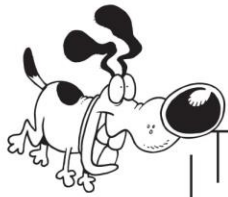
**Yes, he would like that!**



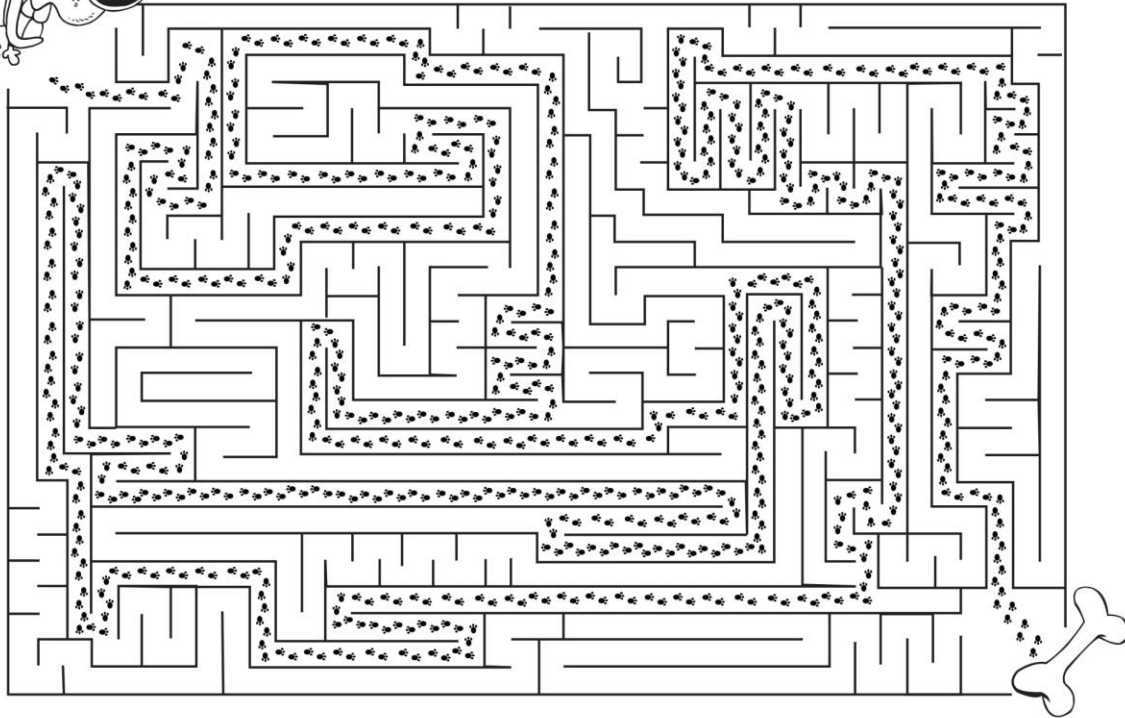




# Games and resources



## Teachers Answers





Eager  
Playful  
Friendly



Wagging Tail



Wagging Tail

# Memory Game Cards



Shy / Afraid  
(Tail between legs,  
head low, crouching)



Shy / Afraid  
(Tail between legs,  
head low, crouching)



Crying / Hurt  
In pain



Fur raised, ears up,  
tail up  
(often over the back),  
stiff body.

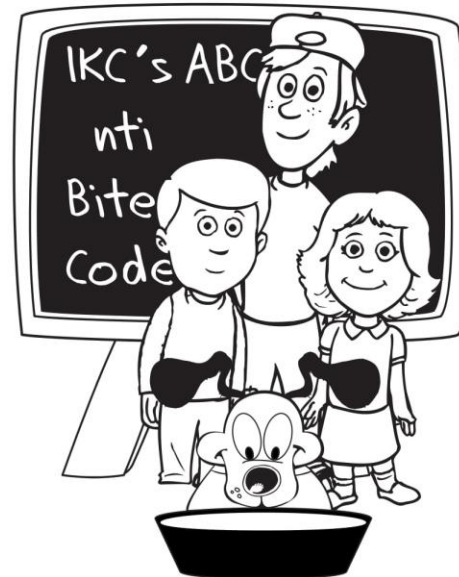
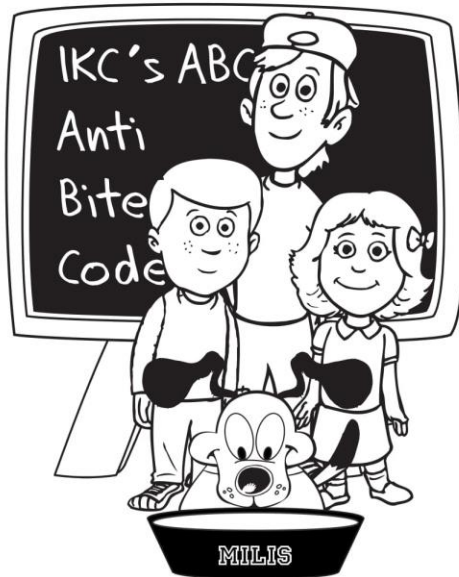


Fur raised, ears up,  
tail up  
(often over the back),  
stiff body.



Crying / Hurt  
In pain

Can you spot the 8 differences?



# Reward !!





# Future work

- To email **ALL** primary school with details of scheme and how to download / access scheme
- Offer to Department of Education : aim to get on National curriculum
- Offer to secondary schools with age appropriate content. Expand scheme into other areas of curriculum with add- ons : geography, science, history, maths, social science.
- Expand material to annotated videos of body language

# Thank You

