



## Navigating New Family Dynamics: Dogs and Babies

By Jen Shryock, CDBC, and John Visconti, CPDT-KA



### THE CALL

You sit down to listen to voicemails. Some messages are about puppies; some are fairly straight-forward training requests for adult dogs. But there is one distress call that creates a pit in your stomach. A mom is in tears because her 6-year-old dog snapped at her 18-month-old child. She and her spouse are scared and considering rehoming, but the dog was their first ‘child’ so there’s a powerful emotional attachment. They desperately want your help. To make matters even more challenging, the caller states that she is six months pregnant.

How would you feel after hearing this message? Comfortable? Anxious? Unconfident? Unfamiliar with children at this age? Able or unable to relate to this family? Able to counsel them in the most empathic way possible while also advocating for the dog?

### THE FACTS

There are more than 52,000,000 dogs in the United States alone. Roughly one-third of all homes have a dog as a pet. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), approximately 800,000 dog bites requiring medical attention occur each year. More than 50 percent of all dog bite victims are children (half of those under the age of six). While only 12 percent of adults require medical treatment, 26 percent of all children need to go to the emergency room or see a doctor. The majority of child bites are to the face, neck and head. The most likely place for the attack to occur is in the home of the victim.

According to the CDC, dog bites are a greater health problem for children than measles, mumps and whooping cough combined. They are more common than injuries from bike accidents, playground injuries, mopeds, skateboards or ATVs. Dog bite treatments cost more than a billion dollars each year.

### THE OPPORTUNITY

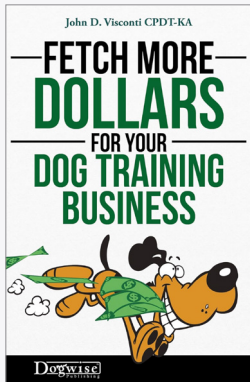
Cases like these can be challenging and take quite a bit to unpack, which is what makes them fertile ground for trainers seeking to expand their businesses by helping people in need in their community. Given the statistics cited above, this training niche offers undeniably fertile ground. While many trainers shy away from these cases, they are typical for Family Paws LLC Licensed Educators ([www.familypaws.com](http://www.familypaws.com)). Through education, handouts, online resources, and offering programs to new and expecting families *before* they have a problem, Family Paws LLC has been dedicated to keeping families safe since 2002.

### QUESTIONS AND MYTHOLOGY

- “We have been told that bringing our baby’s blanket home for our dog to sniff is important. Is this recommended?”
- Our dog has always slept in the bed with us. Do we need to keep him out of the bedroom?
- How do we introduce our dog(s) to the baby?
- We’ve heard that carrying around a doll baby will help our dog to acclimate to our newborn. Is that true?
- Should we stream videos of babies making noises, including crying, to help our dog acclimate to our baby’s arrival?

### THE QUESTIONS FAMILY PAWS LLC ANSWERS FOR TRAINERS

- Why is it better to view the baby coming home as a ‘home coming’ rather than an introduction?
- What are Grumble Zones? What are Growl Zones?
- What are the five different types of supervision?
- When might it be time to rehome a dog?



## FETCH MORE DOLLARS FOR YOUR DOG TRAINING BUSINESS

Written by John D Visconti

Published by Dogwise Publishing, Wematchee, Washington; Released February 2015; 120 pages;

Where to purchase: Dogwise, \$19.95; Amazon, \$19.95 paperback, Kindle, \$18.95; Barnes and Noble, \$9.99 ebook.

### At last, sales coaching for dog trainers!

Dog trainers generally don't think of themselves as salespeople many in fact recoil at the thought! However, when you define selling as the process of communicating the benefits that your services can provide to owners and their dogs, you realize that you must be an effective salesperson to have a successful business. Author John Visconti takes the mystery and fear out of the selling process in this book which belongs in the toolbox of every professional dog trainer. Meet your own personal sales coach!

Thank Goodness! At long last, an approach that focuses on the people-motivating aspects of the business of pet dog training. It doesn't matter how good you are at training dogs, if you lack sales savvy and people skills for promotion, few dogs will benefit from your experience and expertise. I love this book. I really like the style well written, catchy and always straight to the point.

– Dr. Ian Dunbar, Founder of The Association of Professional Dog Trainers.

In this playful and incredibly enjoyable book, John Visconti shows readers many qualities that they already possess to sell their training services effectively and with heart. No longer will sales be a dirty word and trainers who read and apply the wisdom from this book will relish in their confidence and happily realize their goal of helping more dogs and owners. – Malena DeMartini-Price, author of *Treating Separation Anxiety in Dogs*

I'm thrilled to finally see this helpful information in print! The profession of dog training will benefit from all dog trainers learning the simple selling techniques John outlines in his book. You don't have to be a car salesman, but you also don't have to give away all your services for free. There is another way and John highlights it in this easy-to-read and understand book. Get it now and help more clients by learning the techniques John teaches! – Robin Bennett, author of *All About Dog Daycare - A Blueprint for Success*

- What is a 'Success Station'?
- How does supervision/management change as the baby grows older? What are the key developmental stages?
- What are the Four Pillars of dog awareness?

### THE GOAL

Through a series of upcoming columns, we'll address the topics noted above as well as others, with the goal of helping trainers to build Dog Aware Generations, a program from Family Paws Parent Education that aims to create families where children and dogs live safely and harmoniously. Spoiler alert: Bringing the baby's blanket home from the hospital for your dog to sniff isn't all it's cracked up to be. In fact, there are many disadvantages to doing so.

See you in the next column!



**Jennifer Shryock** is a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC) and Licensed Family Dog Mediator as well as the owner of Family Paws® LLC in Cary, North Carolina. In 2000, her family adopted their first German Shepherd rescue dog. That inspired her work with the rescue organization as a counselor and trainer. There, she discovered families with babies or young

children who found their situation overwhelming and were often on the verge of surrendering their cherished dog. Once she

recognized new and expecting parents' needs for support and education, she began developing resources for families and dog professionals. These passions fueled her creation of Family Paws™ Parent Education, which now offers programs across the United States, Canada, and beyond. By combining her special education experience, passion for supporting new families with her skills as a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant, she was able to create programs that support parents looking to prepare for life with a dog and baby and dogs and toddlers.



**John D. Visconti, CPDT-KA** is the owner of Rising Star Dog Training Services, LLC and Rising Star Dog Training, LLC, based in Cary, North Carolina. His first book, "Fetch More Dollars for Your Dog Training Business" was the 2015 winner of the prestigious Dog Writers Association of America Maxwell Award reference book of the year. His most recent book, "Pepper Becoming," recounts his eventful and unlikely journey with an abandoned, unwanted shelter dog. John has written several columns for BARKS from the Guild and Association for Professional Dog Training International's Chronicle of the Dog. He has also served as a chair for the APDT International's business subcommittee and presented several coaching lectures and webinars to dog training schools and force-free organizations.