

## **Dog's that dislike family members**

Many dogs act differently towards different members of the family. This can be because of various reasons and identifying the animal's motivation for the dislike of the family member is important;

- Fear
- Concern
- Anxiety
- Unsure
- Worry
- Lack of confidence

Being fearful of the advances by people towards the dog can be quite intimidating for pets that lack confidence. It is important that the dog feels safe and that the people are also kept completely safe. Allowing the pet to see people at a distance will allow the dog to get his confidence. Behind a baby gate or on a lead with the owner sat at a safe distance are ways of familiarizing the dog. Avoiding eye contact, and direct approaches. Tossing treats towards the dog or offering toys increases the positivity associated with the person.

If your dog is particularly motivated by food, feeding the dogs meals whilst in proximity to the new family member increases the positive association. Only progress at a rate that the dog can tolerate and is being successful

Play, attention and petting should be given by the new family member and reduced to a minimum by other family members so the value of the newcomer is increased. Building a relationship on neutral territory is also a useful way to develop a bond. Walks and exercise in interesting areas creates a stimulating and exciting environment within which the dog can relax. This will allow the dog and person to develop their relationship. Feeding, grooming and all pleasurable activities should be left to the new comer as long as the dog is being successful. Visits to the vet, bathing and treatments or another activity with negative connotations, should be left to an established member of the family.

Always seek the advice of a professional behaviour counsellor or your home vet before implementing a behaviour modification programme.

