

# May I Pet Your Dog by Stephanie Calmenson

The how-to guide for kids meeting dogs (and dogs meeting kids).

Dogs bite kids. Why? Most often it is because children unknowingly demonstrate inappropriate behavior toward dogs that frightens or upsets them, and the dogs instinctively react to protect themselves. Many children have never been taught that there is a polite and safe way to approach and pet a dog. Many parents have never considered that children must be taught that correct behavior around pets matters.

Now we have been provided with a great tool to help us teach children just that skill. Stephanie Calmenson has written a children's book that is a show-and-tell gem, whether it is read to toddlers by parents and educators, or read by somewhat older children by themselves.

Because the story is so charmingly and simply narrated by Harry, a real-life longhaired dachshund belonging to author Stephanie Calmenson, its very simplicity belies the actual import of the book's message. The clever illustrations beautifully emphasize the author's carefully chosen, profound words: "Ask the owner before greeting the dog. Pet gently. Big dogs and little dogs can be friends. Don't approach dogs who are not accompanied by an owner. Don't approach dogs whose owners say no. Stay away from dogs who are sleeping, eating, caring for puppies, chewing a bone, toy, or stick. Service dogs are working dogs who should not be petted when working."

Stephanie has written a slim (32 pages) easy-to-read mountain of information that is invaluable. Jan Ormerod has accompanied the text with the best teaching illustrations I have yet seen in any publication.

Buy "MAY I PET YOUR DOG" or borrow it from your library and read it often. I have.

*Barbara Axel, breeder/trainer/exhibitor, Board Member of North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance (NCRAOA), has organized and participated in programs promoting responsible pet ownership since the late '60's.*

*Positive interactions between dogs and children under the supervision of adults has been a primary goal.*