



Dog parks - do's and donts:

- Dog parks are for friendly, well socialized and healthy dogs. NOT aggressive or fearful animals. It only takes one attack on someone's friendly dog to create fear aggression issues
- The off-leash park is overwhelming for fearful dogs which is counter effective for confidence building
- Do not mix large and small breed dogs (small breeds can be easily injured, or large breeds can become predatory towards them)
- Always scan the park for potential aggressive dogs before entering
- stay with your dog at all times and step in if he is being bullied or bullying others (NEVER let them "work it out")
- toys and treats can cause fights, please leave those at home
- puppies should be at least 6 months old

Warning Signs:

- Freezing/tension in the body
 - Direct stare, head on position
 - Space invasion
 - hooking head over the back
- *interrupt before a fight happens with a come when called*
- Wagging does not always mean friendly, the position of the tail is important.
- at spine level is friendly and calm
 - low is appeasing
 - high on the back, over aroused, predatory or aggressive

What should play look like:

Dogs use "calming signals" to keep the peace. It is a polite and friendly way to interact, and how humans and dogs can tell that everything is ok. Calming signals are:

- sniffing
- looks away
- tongue flicks
- play bows
- sitting/down
- yawns

When dogs play, they usually: play wrestle or chase each other,. You should see them stop and offer each other calming signals to let each other know that this is a game. Play should look like this:
wrestle - stop and play bow, wrestle, lay down and look away.

Body language is the most important factor, here are some books:

Canine Body Language – Photographic Guide, Brenda Aloff

On Talking Terms with Dogs, Turid Rugaas