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DOGGONESAFE.COM'S SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

When is a child old enough to interact with or walk a dog without supervision? That's a question many parents ask. Unfortunately there is no "one size fits all" rule. You are going to have to evaluate both your child and your dog to decide when the time is right.

DoggoneSafe.com suggests

- When the child can read the dog's body language
- When the child and dog have a mutually respectful relationship
- When the dog will happily and willingly follow directions from the child
- If the dog has never shown any sign of aggression toward people or other dogs and does not chase cats or other animals
- When the child knows how to interpret situations and take appropriate action.

Most kids under 12 will not meet these criteria.

Colleen Pelar, CPDT, is the author of *Living with Kids and Dogs . . . Without Losing Your Mind*. For additional information about safe interactions between kids and dogs, please visit www.LIVINGwithKIDSandDOGS.com.