How to Approach a Dog

Remember these steps when meeting and greeting a dog:

Always walk slowly and quietly to the dog’s owner to ask if you can pet the dog.

If the owner says “yes,” curl your hand into a closed fist with the back of your hand facing upward. Extend your hand slowly to the dog.

Allow the dog to sniff the back of your hand. We recognize people on sight; dogs recognize people by scent. Dogs sniff people to learn their scent.

After the dog has sniffed your hand and has become familiar with you, pet it gently under the chin or on the chest.

Respect a dog’s space. Do not stick your face into a dog’s face or poke or prod at a dog with your hands this may make a dog feel afraid.