

Principal Thoughts December 2005

Did you know that I had a dog? For years my own parents worried that my wife and I were going to be one of those, "Weird Dog Families." We had pictures of our dog everywhere in our house; we had artwork about dogs, books about dogs, and we even signed some birthday cards from Maggie – our black lab. We stopped short of referring to ourselves as Mommy and Daddy to the dog. Most people at Douglas don't know that I have a dog. But you all know that I have children.

I always swore that pictures of my children would never replace Maggie's picture on the fridge. Always true to my word, she still has a place of honor on the refrigerator – her picture, however, is five years old now, while Hunter and Milo's pictures are updated monthly. When did I escape the "Weird Dog Family," category? Soon after I had kids.

The day that my wife and I brought Hunter home from the hospital, our family greeted us at the door, but the only one that we were concerned about was Maggie. Prior to bringing the baby home I let Maggie play with a hat that Hunter had worn, I bought her a special toy to play with from the baby, I even spent some extra quality time with her playing fetch at the local lake. When we came home we carefully placed the baby in his carrier on the floor and let Maggie smell him, lick him, and dance around us. Then we put Hunter on a blanket on the living room floor, brought Maggie over and let her nudge him, lick him some more and get her fill of him until she became more interested in her toy and went to her couch in the family room. My wife asked her sister if she wanted to hold the baby after she washed her hands.

"Wash my hands?!" said my startled sister-in-law, "You just let that dog lick him and you want me to wash my hands??"

"Yes." We were precipitously close to being the "Weird Dog People."

And so it went. I don't know for sure when Maggie went from number one to number two, and now number three, but I do know that of all the pictures that I have in my office at Douglas, there has not been one of Maggie.

What does this all have to do with education? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. I just wanted you to know that I have a dog! That, and to remind you to hug your kids – mine prevented me from becoming a "Weird Dog Person." Yours have probably done wonders for you.

Have a happy holiday, and feel free to stop by and see my latest picture of Maggie.

Sincerely,
Dr. Whitbeck