



How to Introduce Your New Dog to Children and Other Pets

Moving to a new forever home—even though it’s a blessing your new dog will soon be grateful for—can be overwhelming at first.

There are new sights, sounds, smells, and rules to get used to every day. For that reason, introducing excitable, noisy children—or skeptical pets who are wondering why there’s a new dog in their space—can cause stress.

It takes time for everybody to settle into this new arrangement, but there’s a way to make all pets (and humans) in the home more comfortable during this transition.

Use the following three principles (separation, supervision, and slowness) to ensure your pets’ and children’s physical safety and emotional wellbeing as everyone gets to know one another...

Separation

Other Pets

All pets—including your new dog and other dogs or cats—should have a space of their own where they have privacy and feel safe. And this space should be equipped with all their food, water, and other supplies.

This could be a room of their own, or a crate where they feel comfortable (so long as other pets aren’t allowed to stand right outside and ‘guard’ the crate). That’s especially true for cats. They should always have a ‘dog-free’ area in the home, for safety and for privacy.

As you allow your pets to interact more and more, this safe space option helps them feel calmer and more secure—which promotes friendlier interactions.

Children

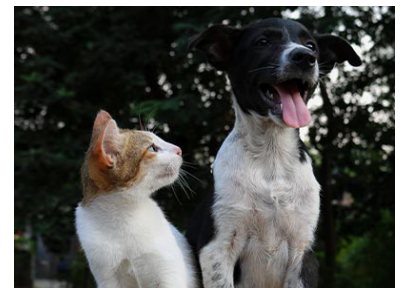
Even though dogs and children can be the best of friends, sometimes the energy, high-pitched voices, and roughhousing of children can be uncomfortable or even scary to a dog.

Giving your dog the option to have privacy will make them more likely to enjoy the time they do share with your kids—which will help the friendship develop faster.

Supervision

Other Pets

Until you are ABSOLUTELY SURE your pets and your new dog get along—that there’s no chance of fighting when you’re not around—only allow supervised interactions at first.



Children

The same goes for kids. Be sure your dog and children are calm around one another before you allow unsupervised interactions.

Teach your children the right way to interact with your dog—to avoid pinching, pulling, squeezing, face touching, etc.—and supervise them to be sure they follow these rules.

For very young children and babies, it may be best to avoid unsupervised interactions altogether until your child is older.

Slowness

Other Pets

With new pet interactions, there's no such thing as "too slow..."

You can start with simple "sharing." Offer towels, blankets, or toys to your new dog and your other pets. Then, after a couple of days, switch and give the items to the other pet—this will allow your pets to get used to one another's scents before they meet face to face.

You can also let your pets sniff each other on either side of a closed door. Then, on either side of a baby gate.

After that, allow your pets to meet one another in the same room, on leashes. Finally, when you're sure they're getting along well, start with BRIEF unsupervised interactions, gradually increasing the amount of time they're together.

Children

Slowness works well for children, too. Also, remember this very important word: Calm.

Your kids are probably bursting with excitement about their new dog—and their enthusiasm may cause them to squeal or scream, make lots of noise, or greet their new pup with a bear hug.

However, to help your new dog get used to children, it's best to start with calm interactions.

Explain to children that dogs don't understand happy noises (like screeching or talking loudly) the same way we do, and it will make the dog feel better if they use quiet voices.

Initially, have your children sit down on the floor or couch, and allow your new dog to come to them—don't allow children to chase the dog.

Bonus Tips

By always keeping the above three principles in mind, you increase the odds of everybody getting off on the right foot and developing strong friendships.

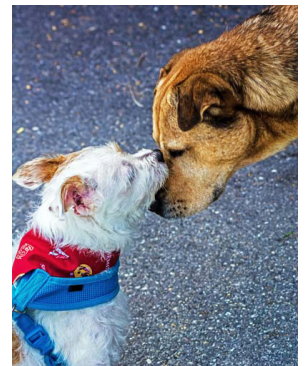
To really maximize your chances of success, you can use the following tips, too...

Update your other pets' vaccines and parasite prevention before the arrival of your new dog.

Learn about the body language of dogs and cats, if you're not already familiar—that will help you interpret their interactions.

Make your other pets feel more comfortable by maintaining their usual schedule as much as possible, and by making some time each day to give them your undivided attention so they don't feel jealous or left out.

Wait two weeks before offering 'high value' items such as special treats or toys—once your new pup is settled in, they'll be less likely to be protective of these special items.



Don't hesitate to seek the help of a professional trainer if needed—some can come to your home to observe and offer advice during new pet introductions.

Sometimes, pets won't be best of friends with one another... but, most can find a way to live peacefully together.

On the other hand, some pets are inseparable buddies! They'll appreciate one another's companionship when you can't be home yourself.

Of course, dogs and children can have an amazing bond—one that enriches both of their lives and adds even more love to the home.

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