

Your Children and Pet Safety

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Teaching your children basic safety many ways. A child that is age will usually develop a fear instruction children may be for the rest of their lives. The first children is to get obedience training control your pet around your children.



tips around pets can protect them in growled at, or bitten, at a young of animals. Without proper basic injured and remain afraid of pets step in helping to protect your for your dog, which will help you

Experts suggest that all children young age. The majority of family pets include rabbits, guinea pigs, pet ownership takes work but the result can be very rewarding. Both your children and pets will be happier and healthier if they know and understand the rules. The safety tips listed below will help your children enjoy, respect, and understand your pet's behaviour.

should be taught pet safety at a pets are dogs and cats. Some other hamsters, fish, and birds. Parenting and

Safety Tips for Kids & Pets

-  Show your children how to pet an animal gently. Teach them to not pull the animal's tail, ears, poke their eyes or throw things at them. Teach your children that animals are not toys and that they deserve our love and respect.
-  Some dogs are very attached to their toys. Never take a toy or bone from a dog's mouth unless the dog is willing to drop it.
-  Make sure your pet has a quiet and comfortable place to sleep. Don't allow your pets to sleep with your children.



- 🐾 Do not invade a dog's space. Teach your children never to bother animals while they're sleeping or tending to their young. The dog might become agitated and bark at the child trying to defend its territory.
- 🐾 Let your dog or cat eat without being disturbed. Explain to your children that cats, and especially dogs, can become defensive around their food dish. Never put your hand near the bowl when the pet is eating.
- 🐾 Never leave a young child alone with an animal. Accidents can happen when children tease pets or touch them in a way that makes them uncomfortable.
- 🐾 Do not sneak up on a pet. If frightened or alarmed, dogs and cats can become defensive. Pet birds can injure themselves. Approach the pet from the front with your hands visible and speak in a low, soothing voice.
- 🐾 Show your children how to observe the pet's body language. Tell your children that since dogs and cats can't talk they communicate by using body language. A dog is upset if he shows the following signs – tail up, ears back, hair standing up, barking, growling, or baring his teeth. A cat is upset if she shows the following signs – hair standing up, ears back, hissing sounds or dilated eyes. Children should not go near an animal that is displaying these signs. If your child is confronted with a dog showing these signs the child should not scream, run, or stare into the animal's eyes. If your child runs, the dog will usually chase the child and may even attack. Teach your children to walk away slowly with no fast movements while avoiding any eye contact with the dog. Children should tell their parents immediately if a dog, cat or other animal has bitten them.
- 🐾 Tell your children to ask for the owner's permission before petting an unknown dog or cat. Some dogs and cats are afraid of children, some might be sick or injured, and some dogs might be working dogs for the handicapped. There may be a number of reasons why the pet should not be approached. Once your child has the permission from the dog or cat's owner, they should then approach the pet slowly, allowing the dog or cat to smell their scent and then petting the animal gently.
- 🐾 Do not approach dogs that are fighting. They might become more excited if they are yelled at or separated.
- 🐾 Involving your children in the care of your pet instils a sense of responsibility.
- 🐾 Never threaten to get rid of a pet if your child fails to perform certain duties. Children may stop caring for the pet as a safeguard to keep from feeling vulnerable to the possible loss.
- 🐾 Teach your children to wash their hands after playing with any animal. Children can contract worms from dogs or cats. Turtles and reptiles are carriers of salmonella and other bacteria.
- 🐾 Discourage your children from letting pets lick their face. While children are more likely to become infected with worms or some type of bacteria by putting their hands in their mouth, it is still wise to tell your children not to let animals lick their faces.



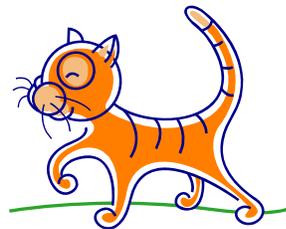
- 🐾 Don't let your child's friends bring their pets into your home without adult supervision.
- 🐾 Don't let your pet play with your child's toys—they may not be pet-safe. The reverse is also true.
- 🐾 Don't give your child balloons to play with around your pet. Your pet and child may be frightened by the noise of a popping balloon. Please remember that a broken balloon is a choking hazard for both.

Introducing your Pet to a New Baby

The first rule of introducing your dog or cat to your newborn is that it must be a gradual process. A curious and affectionate pet (excluding goldfish) can unintentionally harm a baby. Pets may also become very jealous of the new baby. They need time to adjust to a new family member. When you know that a child is on the way, please consider the following:



- 🐾 Review basic obedience skills daily with your dog.
- 🐾 Get your pet (dogs and cats alike) used to less attention. Don't hold or let them sit in your lap all the time.
- 🐾 Carry a baby-like doll wrapped in a blanket and mimic the change that will be part of the pet's life. At times, use a tape recording of a baby crying.
- 🐾 Set up all the accessible baby stuff like the swing, high chair, playpen, etc.
- 🐾 Set limits on the pets. Pets should not be allowed in the baby's room.
- 🐾 Before you bring your newborn home, let your pet smell the blanket with the baby's scent on it.
- 🐾 Reward your pet with gentle words and caresses so that it forms a positive association with the baby even before they are introduced. New parents should make an extra effort to spend 'quality' time with their faithful pet so that they know they have not been replaced.
- 🐾 Dogs are also likely to be curious. Bear in mind that your dog may react in a way that you don't expect when your baby arrives.
- 🐾 Never let a pet share a bed with your baby.



More Important Factors

Many pets are very tolerant of small children, but it's still important to be aware of the potential dangers to your baby. There are precautions you can take to keep your baby safe, especially once he is crawling and walking.

A good pet can be beneficial for your child. As your child begins to learn to watch things and is gaining eye control, a pet can be very helpful in aiding in faster development. Petting the animal will further develop the baby's sense of touch. Eventually, your pet can act as a liaison for you in teaching gentle play.



Cats don't usually get jealous, but they are attracted to the warmth of a baby's crib. Use a net on the stroller when it is in the yard. Even if you don't own a cat, neighbouring cats can also be curious.

Dogs always need supervision when babies and children are around. No matter how trustworthy your pet may be, if a toddler is pulling its tail, or poking its eye, it may lose patience.

Cats will often escape if a child is teasing or hurting them, but some will scratch and bite. It's fairly common for young children to be nipped at by their own pet.

Without meaning to, your child may encourage your dog to chase and play-bite them. These dog bites tend to be minor, but keep an eye on how your children and pet play together.

You may find it helpful to use a safety gate to keep your pets and children apart. Stair gates can also help keep your baby away from animal foods and litter trays.

A yard could be fenced in such a way that there is a safe baby area and a separate pet area.



Curious babies have been known to use the cat flap in the door to escape outside. You may need to lock it while your baby is crawling or walking around.

Double check with your veterinarian how often you need to de-worm your pets. Never leave worming tablets or other pet medications where your child can reach them.

Resources:

- [Humane Society of Canada](#)
- [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#)
- [Canadian Association of Professional Pet Dog Trainers](#)

Canine Body Language

- [ASPCA Safety Tips for Children](#) – to view Canine Body Language