



INTRODUCING CHILDREN AND NEW DOGS

Children and dogs can be a wonderful combination. Dogs have been proven to have many positive influences on children; however, common sense and some ground rules need to be applied.

- Always allow your dog to approach your child(ren) first.
- Ask your child(ren) to sit down calmly and wait for your new arrival to approach and explore.
- Have treats at hand to award good behaviour.
- **Refer to our crate training information!** The crate and safety place can come in very handy when doing introductions.
- **DO NOT** let children run around and chase your dog!
- Do not approach your dog from behind or pat them directly on the head.
- If your dog has approached you and the child(ren), stroke them on the sides or the back.
- If your dog moves away, this is an indication it has had enough - please ensure the dog is left alone from this point.
- Ask your child(ren) to speak calmly and quietly, to help the dog feel at ease around them.
- Tell children not to scream and be loud around dogs, especially dogs that are new, or unknown to you.

- When your dog has settled and adjusted, engage them in play through rope toys and dog toys. Take breaks and allow the dog to explore toys at their own pace. Too much tugging and pulling may teach the dog you are trying to steal the toy.
- Do not let adults or children engage in rough play with small puppies or dogs as this can enforce aggressive or rough behaviour - an accident waiting to happen.
- Ensure adults and children do not take toys or bones away from a dog.
- Keep children's and dog toys separate and be cautious when children are playing with their own toys!
- Always ensure dogs are fed separately from children and adults.
- Place their food in a separate room and leave them alone to eat.

TIP: Training can be very effective here. Teach the dog to sit and wait before you place the food down. This will teach them not to steal, as well as ensuring they do not snap for food when it is placed.

- Dogs should not be disturbed by children (or anyone) whilst eating. They should be left alone and separated until they have finished eating.
- NEVER allow other pets, children or adults to approach a dog whilst eating! Your new arrival may believe you intend to steal the food and snap. It is important to leave the dog and build up this trust slowly.

AGAIN: Always let a dog approach you and the children first to help them settle.

- New environments and new people can be very overwhelming. Your new dog does not know you yet and does not know that they can trust you.
- Do not let children (or anyone) get too close to your dog's face or maintain long eye contact. They do not like anyone close to their faces. Particularly people they don't know well.

- Hugging or kissing your new dog can make them uncomfortable and be overwhelming for them - they do not understand a child's intention and this can make them feel threatened.

TIP: This is again where crate training is very effective! Provide a safe place for the dog to sleep using crates and safety gates. Dim lighting and soft radio music can help them to settle.

- Ensure adults and children do not touch your dog whilst they are sleeping, as it may startle and nip out of fear.

PLEASE

ALWAYS ENSURE CHILDREN ARE NOT LEFT ALONE WITH ANY DOG
UNSUPERVISED.

- Crates and safety gates are exceptionally helpful to avoid this.
- If at any point you need to leave the room where your child(ren) and dog are; please ensure they are separated and a safety gate is in place.
- Again, NEVER leave dogs and children - especially younger children unsupervised!
- Precaution must be taken for the welfare of both the dog and the child(ren).

...and finally, as much as we understand the excitement around getting a new dog or puppy, please ensure your child is aware a dog is not a toy for their amusement. A dog can be an amazing experience for children, teaching them empathy and responsibility. Before your new dog arrives please sit down with your children and go over some ground rules. Always reinforcing this, to ensure they know how to approach dogs.

