



Introducing Your Baby To Your Pet

Pets are often a young couple's first 'baby', and chances are pretty good that your dog or cat knows that they're the beloved only child. However, things are going to be changing very soon, and your pack is going to be expanding. With baby proofing your home and making sure you're bringing your newborn home to a safe environment in and outdoors. It's important to remember to keep your other furry baby in mind and how they might react to this new tiny human joining the family. So, we've compiled some helpful tips on introducing your new baby to your dog.

First, while you're still pregnant, be sure to sign your dog up for basic obedience classes if he or she has not yet been. Your pregnancy will provide more than enough time for your pup to learn the basics like not jumping up to greet you, which might become an issue when you're carrying an infant.

When coming home with your newborn, be sure to brace yourself for plenty of licks! Your pet is going to be super excited to reunite with you and meet the newest addition to the family. After he has calmed down, sit down with your baby and allow your dog to sniff around and get acquainted. If your dog is acting calm and gently, be sure to reward him with treats for his good behaviour. Be sure to consciously include your dog in baby-related activities. Allow them to sit close-by when your changing nappies so they get familiar with the activity.

When nursing your young one, dogs can also easily pick up that you are busy doing something intimate and usually tend to calm down themselves. Ask your partner to pet the dog to keep the dog occupied and to reward him for staying calm, this way your dog will associate you feeding with something positive. It's also likely that your dog will get frustrated at times with the new house dynamics. There will be plenty of new rules, and some of his behaviours will be frowned upon that was usually accepted pre-baby. Instead of scolding at your dog, be patient and redirect their behaviour to something else like his favourite chew-toy while everyone's getting accustomed to the new changes.

However, it might not always be sunshine, rainbows and love at first sight, that's why it's important to have designated baby and designated dog spaces. Do this by installing safety gates to areas that are off-limits to your pup, so your baby can roll and crawl and play undisturbed. You also don't want your baby's toys and your dog's toys to get mixed up. Be sure to provide your pup with plenty of chew toys, so he doesn't feel the urge to steal your little one's toys.

It's crucial to keep your dog's bowls far away or on the counter when it's not mealtime. As soon as your baby is crawling, the dog bowls can very easily be in the way and cause a mess. The water and kibble can also easily be a choking hazard for your young one. Apart from this, it's important to teach your baby to stay away from your dog when it's feeding time, as dogs can easily get territorial over food.

It's not just about training your dog though, be sure also to teach your baby as they are growing older, how to pet the dog gently without hurting him. It's all about mutual respect between your growing baby and ageing pup. In the beginning, it's crucial to always, always supervise. Never leave your infant alone with your dog, even if he's the most loving dog in the world, your dog won't be used to infant behaviour, which might quickly annoy him.

Take things slow; your dog will sense your protectiveness over your baby and will generally help you in protecting the smallest member of the pack. Soon enough your dog will become familiar with this new stranger and become a lifelong pal!

Sources:

<https://www.cesarsway.com/dog-training/socialization/introduce-your-dog-to-your-baby>