



Remember;

**Never leave a baby or child
alone with a dog -
no matter how trustworthy
you think they are.**



Dangerous Dogs

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Aims of this Guidance

The benefits of owning pets are well established. Having a pet can have physical and emotional benefits for a child as well as teaching them about responsibility and caring for living creatures. However, a number of children of different ages have been seriously injured or have died from attacks by dogs in recent years.

The primary aim of this guidance is to protect children in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough from the serious injuries that can be inflicted by dogs that are prohibited, dangerous or poorly managed.

The guidelines set out to explain and describe:

- The children most likely to be vulnerable and the dogs most likely to be dangerous;
- The information that should be gathered when any child is injured by a dog and the criteria that should prompt a referral to Children's Social Care;
- The basis for an effective assessment of risk and the options for action that could be considered by strategy groups or case conferences

Research suggests that abuse of animals can be part of a constellation of intra-familial violence, which can include maltreatment of children and domestic violence and abuse. However, this does not imply that children who are cruel to animals necessarily go on to be violent adults, or that adults who abuse animals are also violent to their partners and/or children. Effective investigation and assessment are crucial to determine whether there are any links between these factors and the possible risks to the safety and welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults.

Dangerous Dogs

The Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) (amended with effect from 13 May 2014 by the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014) provides detailed information on the legislation covering certain types of dogs, the responsibilities of owners and the actions that can be taken to remove and/or control dogs. As a result of the 2014 Act, it extends to private places, the offence of owning or being in charge of a dog that is dangerously out of control (previously in a public place); provides that a dog attack on an assistance dog constitutes an aggravated offence; and ensures that the courts can take account of the character of the owner of the dog, as well as of the dog, when assessing whether a dog should be destroyed on the grounds that it is a risk to the public;

Any dog can be 'dangerous' (as defined by The Act) if it has already been known to inflict or threaten injury

A dog can also be defined as “dangerously out of control” by the Act: “For the purposes of this Act a dog shall be regarded as dangerously out of control on any occasion on which there are grounds for reasonable apprehension that it will injure any person or assistance dog, whether or not it actually does so”

Certain dogs are 'prohibited' and if any agency has any knowledge or report of a dog of this type, **the matter should be reported to the police immediately.** Prohibited breeds are defined by the Act as “any dog of the type known as Pit Bull Terrier, the Japanese Tosa, the Dogo Argentino and the Fila Brasileiro”

Injuries inflicted by certain types of dog are likely to be especially serious and damaging. Strong, powerful dogs such as Pit Bull Types will often use their back jaws (as opposed to 'nipping') and powerful neck muscle to shake their victims violently as they grasp;

When reports of 'prohibited' dogs and known or potentially dangerous dogs are linked to the presence of children, all agencies should be alert to the possible risks and consequences.

The Dog and the Child: Family Context

When you visit a family that has a dog you need to consider whether or not the dog poses any threat to the child's health, development or safety.

- All children are potentially vulnerable from attack(s) from dog(s);
- Young and very small children are likely to be at greatest risk;
- A young child may be unaware and unprepared for the potential dangers they could face;
- A young child may be less able to protect themselves and more likely to be of a size that leaves especially vulnerable parts of their body exposed to any 'assault';
- Is it a large dog in a small home;
- Is the dog left alone with the child;
- How much money is spent on the dog compared to the child;
- **If you consider a dog is a serious risk to a child you should contact the police immediately.**

Owners and Families (including extended family and temporary carers)

- Many commentators will insist that 'the owner, not the dog' is the problem;
- There will be occasions when even the 'best' of owners fails to anticipate or prevent their dog's behaviour;
- The care, control and context of a dog's environment will undoubtedly impact on their behaviour and potential risks;
- Research indicates that neutered or spayed dogs are less likely to be territorial and aggressive towards other dogs and people;
- Dogs that are kept and/or bred for the purpose of fighting, defending or threatening are likely to present more risks than genuine pets;
- Some dogs are kept as a status symbol and can be part of the criteria of belonging to a gang.

Owners:

- Owners linked to criminal activity, anti-social behaviour, drugs or violence may have reason to encourage aggressive behaviour from dogs;
- Owners with interests and histories in crime, violence, drugs or anti-social behaviour are unlikely to appreciate or prevent the possible risks their dog(s) present to children;

Families characterised by high levels of aggression and domestic tensions:

- Are more likely to trigger excitement and possible attacks by dogs;
- Are less likely to appreciate and anticipate risks;
- May be less likely to take necessary precautions;
- May be less likely to guarantee the safety of the most vulnerable youngsters;
- Very young, small children living in chaotic or dysfunctional families are likely to be especially vulnerable;

Prohibited, dangerous, powerful dogs are likely to inflict the most serious injuries.

Practitioner Guidance

Any agency aware of a dog that could be prohibited or considered dangerous should collect as much information as possible:

- The dog's name and breed;
- The owner's details;
- Clear discussions with the owner regarding planned management of the dog where there are children in the household or wider family.
- Where the agency/individual is unsure; advice should be sought from Police colleagues.

Risk Factors: Dangerous Dogs

1. Is the dog's owner usually present?
2. Is the dog exercised outside the property?
3. Does the dog have off lead exercise? Does the dog live in a yard/garden?
4. Does the dog destroy/chew things?
5. Has the dog ever been involved in a biting incident with another dog?
6. Has the dog ever bitten a person?
7. Was the dog chosen for its breed or its temperament?
8. Does the owner have any previous convictions?
9. What size is the dog?
10. Is the dog fed from human plates at mealtimes?

Any agency:

- Aware of an injury to a child caused by a dog;
- Or treating an injury to a child caused by a dog;
- Should establish precisely when and how the injuries were caused;
- **If and when there is any history of previous, similar injuries.**

Consideration should be given to whether the injuries caused are "**non accidental injuries**".

Referral to Children's Social Care:

A referral should be considered if any of the following criteria apply:-

- **The child injured is under two years of age;**
- **The child is under five years of age and injuries have required medical treatment;**
- **The child is over five years and under 16 and has been injured more than once by the same dog;**

- **The child is between five years and 18 years and the injuries are significant;**
- **The child/young person is under 16 years of age, injuries have required medical treatment and initial information suggests the dog responsible could be prohibited and/or dangerous;**
- **A prohibited and/or dangerous dog is reported and/or treated, and is believed to be living with and/or frequently associated with children under five years.**

Some referrals might be logged 'for information' only if there is very clearly no significant or continued risk to the child, or other children (for example, if the dog has already been 'put down' or removed).

Some referrals might prompt information on dogs and safe care of children if the incident or injury was clearly minor, if the child was older or if the family have clearly shown themselves to be responsible dog owners.

More serious cases might prompt further and more formal discussions with other agencies including Strategy meetings:

- Home visits to complete fuller assessments and to inform judgements on parenting and the care and control of dog(s)
- Advice might be sought from a vet to help determine the likely nature or level of risk presented by the dog(s).

As with all other assessments **"the welfare of the child is paramount"**.

If agencies cannot be satisfied that any further risks will be addressed, they should consider all statutory options open to them to protect the child or remove the dog(s).

Significant Issues

The RSPCA advice to all professionals who are in contact with a household where there is a dog/s present:

"When looking at, or asking about a dog think about the following points, which should not be considered an exhaustive list but are intended to prompt a professional's curiosity as to the state of the dog's welfare along with suggested courses of action."

"The points relate to Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act, 2006 which imposes a duty of care on a person who is permanently or temporarily responsible for an animal. This duty of care requires that reasonable steps in all the circumstance are taken to ensure that the welfare needs of an animal are met to the extent required by good practice. The welfare needs are:

- The need for a suitable environment;
- The need for a suitable diet;
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;
- The need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals;
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

During the visit ask if there is a dog in the property including the back garden. If there is, and the dog isn't in the same room as you, ask to see him."

Further Information

[The Blue Cross Be Safe with Dogs Leaflet - Guidance for Families](#)

[The Dogs Trust: Staying Safe With Dogs](#)

Battersea Dogs and Cats Home has made this 7 minute animated film to keep children safe around animals: battersea.org.uk

[Kennel Club's Safe & Sound Programme with Resources for Schools](#)

[National Animal Welfare Trust Advice Sheet/Free Webinar](#)



Keeping babies and children safe around dogs in the home

- We know that having a dog can make children very happy and teach them about responsibility, how to be loved and loving, and how to respect living things. However, it is important to remember that dogs are a different species.
- Children tend to interact with dogs in the same way as they do with their friends, so hug them, cuddle them and tell them off.
- Children use very close facial contact which is very different to dog social behaviour and many dogs can find it threatening.
- From the dog's point of view, children behave very differently to adults. They are unpredictable and make a lot of noise. It is for these reasons that children are more likely to be bitten than any other population group. Therefore, there is a potential risk of harm to babies and children when they meet dogs.

There is a lot that parents can do to reduce the risk of dogs harming babies and children. This guide provides advice to parents looking forward to welcoming a new baby into the home, as well as those who already have children and a dog in the household. The advice provided should be shared with friends, neighbours, carers and relatives.

More information on Page 2

Preparing for the arrival of a new baby

- Start preparing your dog as soon as possible for the lifestyle changes a new baby will bring (such as potential changes in walking times, and restrictions on where your dog can go in your home).
- Play sounds that your baby will make and bring out your cot and pram so your dog can get used to them.

For additional fact sheets see www.ihv.org.uk

Keeping babies and children safe around dogs in the home

- Create an area that your dog can go to and relax when you are looking after the baby. Teach him/her to go there using toys and other treats.
- Ensure that worming, vaccinations and flea treatments are up to date. Some families will be eligible for free or low-cost care from some animal welfare charities (such as the Blue Cross and the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA)).
- Families with assistance dogs can expect training and ongoing support from the relevant assistance dog charity (such as Guide Dogs and Medical Detection Dogs).
- If you have any concerns about how your dog is behaving or how they may respond to a new baby, seek advice from your vet or an animal welfare charity (such as the Dogs Trust or RSPCA). They may recommend further advice from a behaviour expert who can help address problems early on, ensuring a smooth introduction. **Do** share your concerns with your midwife or health visitor.

Welcoming a new baby into the home

- Your dog is very likely to be curious. By allowing him/her to see, hear and smell the new baby under strict supervision, they will learn that the baby is nothing to be worried about.
- The noises that babies make and their movements can remind some dogs of prey so **Never leave your baby alone with any dog no matter how safe or friendly you think they are and always supervise whatever the situation.**
- Continue to ensure your dog is exercised, well fed and given attention. In the event, you are unable to meet the welfare needs of your dog, seek early advice from your vet or an animal welfare charity. Also, share your concerns with your midwife or health visitor.

Children and dogs

- As babies become toddlers and toddlers become older children, contact with any dog needs to be supervised by an adult.
- Ensure your dog always has access to a safe place to retreat to if they become stressed or want to go somewhere quiet. Teach your child not to approach your dog when he is in his safe place.
- Teach and watch your child to make sure they do not run and shout around your dog, invade their personal space, hurt or tease them, or disturb them when they are eating, guarding a toy, sick or in pain. Teach your child how to play nicely with your dog.
- Learn the behaviours which dogs use to tell us when they are happy, worried or angry. Watch what your dog is doing so that you can intervene if they are showing signs that they want to be left alone or appear angry, stressed or worried.

Additional Resources:

A new baby and the family dog

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/factsheets-downloads/factsheetnewbabynov13.pdf>

Growing up with a dog

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/company/children>

Understanding dog behaviour

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/behaviour/understanding>

How kids SHOULD interact with dogs

<http://www.allpetseducationandtraining.com.au/how-kids-should-interact-with-dogs---dr-sophia-yin.html>

How kids SHOULD NOT interact with dogs

<https://drsophiayin.com/blog/entry/kids-and-dogs-how-kids-should-and-should-not-interact-with-dogs/>



How kids SHOULD NOT interact with dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

Avoid taking people's food.



Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating.



Avoid stealing other people's toys.



Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys.



Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face.



Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face.



Avoid bothering when asleep.



Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.



Avoid pestering.



Avoid grabbing tail/ears.



Avoid climbing on or trampling.



Avoid climbing on or trampling.



Avoid pinching.



Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.



Avoid screaming around.



Avoid screaming and shouting. Use your 'inside' voice instead.



in partnership with Dr Sophia Yin, DVM MS
www.rspca.org.uk www.drsophiayin.com

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
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How kids SHOULD interact with dogs

Use common sense.

Be polite and kind to pets.

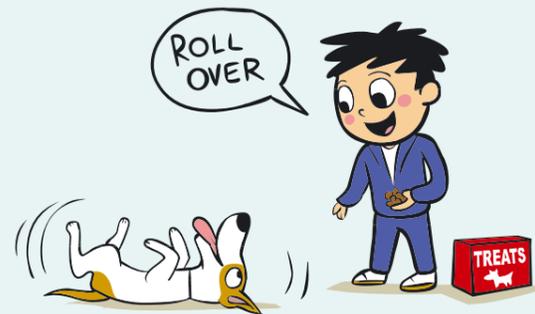


Learn to recognise when your dog is scared or anxious.



Play appropriate games with pets, such as:

Fetch.



Training tricks (like roll over, shake, beg, etc.)

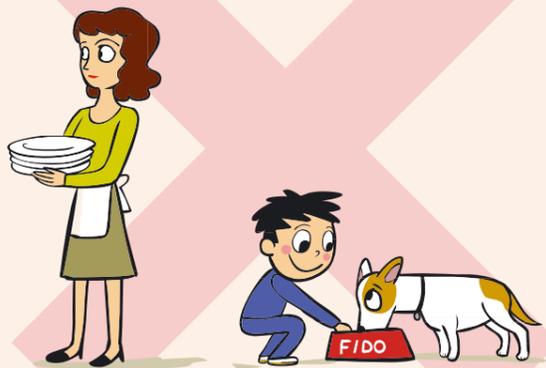
Walking and running with a dog.



Playing hide-and-seek.

Always remember:

Supervise all interactions. Accidents can happen in a split second.



Train your dog to associate the kids with positive experiences so he'll be more likely to tolerate your child in case she accidentally interacts inappropriately.



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www.rspca.org.uk www.drsophiayin.com

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Dogs and children

a guide to staying safe



In partnership with Dr Sophia Yin, DVM MS

www.rspca.org.uk



Why have a dog?

Dogs and children can be great friends and having a dog can help children develop kindness, understanding and respect for living things. Pets can improve a child's social skills with people and caring for a pet can encourage responsibility.

Because of this many families have dogs. Children will quickly learn to treat your dog as part of the family but it is important that you teach your child to stay safe around your dog so that both of them are protected.

This leaflet will help you to learn about dog behaviour so your children stay safe and your dogs stay happy.

What does a happy dog look like?

A dog who wants to meet you will look happy.

1

Dog has a relaxed body posture, smooth hair, mouth open and relaxed, ears in natural position, wagging tail, eyes normal shape.



2

Dog is inviting play with bottom raised, smooth hair, high wagging tail, eyes normal shape, ears in natural position, may be barking excitedly.



3

Dogs weight is distributed across all four paws, smooth hair, tail wagging, face is interested and alert, relaxed mouth and open.

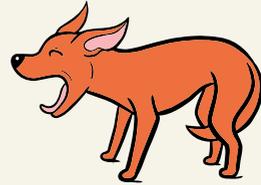


What does a worried dog look like?

These dogs are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you to go near them.

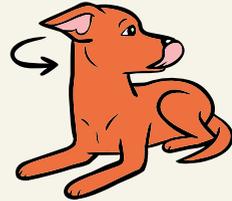
1

Dog is standing but body posture and head position is low. Tail is tucked under, ears are back and dog is yawning.



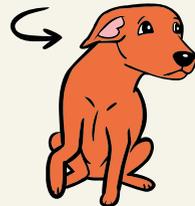
2

Dog is lying down and avoiding eye contact or turning head away from you and lip licking and ears are back.



3

Dog is sitting with head lowered, ears are back, tail tucked away, not making eye contact, yawning, raising a front paw.

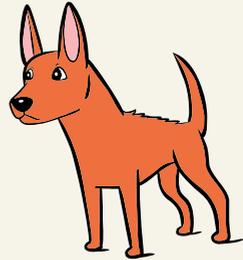


What does an angry or very unhappy dog look like?

These dogs are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

1

Dog is standing with a stiffened body posture, weight forward, ears are up, hair raised, eyes looking at you – pupils dark and enlarged, tail is up and stiff, wrinkled nose.



2

Dog is laid down covering, ears flat, teeth showing, tail down between legs.



3

Dog is standing with body down and weight towards the back, head is tilted upwards, mouth tight, lips drawn back, teeth exposed, eyes staring, ears back and down, snarling.





The 6 Golden Rules

for keeping your child safe and your dog happy

1

Never leave your child alone in the same room as a dog, even your own.



2

Teach your child never to approach dogs when they:

- ▶ are eating or have a treat
- ▶ have a toy or something else they really like
- ▶ are sleeping
- ▶ are unwell, injured or tired
- ▶ are blind or deaf.

3

Teach your child to be kind and polite to dogs. Don't let your child climb on dogs, pull their ears or do anything you wouldn't allow them to do to another child.



4

Teach your child how to play nicely with your dog. For example, your child can teach your dog some really fun tricks like shake a paw, play dead, or roll-over.



5

Supervise your child when they're with your dog – if your dog looks unhappy, let him/her go somewhere they feel safe and happy.



6

Never allow your child to approach a dog they don't know, for example when out in the park.



TOP TIP

We all need a break sometimes – give your dog a cosy spot in a quiet room where they can have their own space. Teach your child to leave your dog alone when they're in their private spot.



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With thanks to Julie Bedford, Certified clinical animal behaviourist.



Photo by Chris Roberts

Keeping children safe around dogs

Teach your child to be calm and careful around dogs to ensure they stay safe!

- Children should never go near dogs they don't know and only pat or play with a dog if they have asked the owner.
- Don't let your children tease your dog or play too roughly with him.
- Teach your dog not to jump up at them or be too boisterous as this can lead to accidents.
- Tell them never to go near or disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, ill or injured as dogs may react badly.

Never leave young children unsupervised with any dog, even if it's only for a few minutes.

- Make sure you socialise your puppy properly with children and teach him how to behave. Doing this will ensure you have a friendly adult dog that is safe to have around children.
- To teach your children how to Be Dog Smart, visit our website to download our resources www.bedogsmart.org.uk

Be a responsible owner and neuter your dog – it's simply the best choice for you and your pet.

If you are interested in rehoming a dog, supporting Dogs Trust or for more information and factsheets about all aspects of dog ownership, please visit www.dogstrust.org.uk or contact:

**Dogs Trust
17 Wakley Street
London
EC1V 7RQ**

Tel: 020 7837 0006

**Reg. Charity Numbers: 227523
and SC037843**



Staying Safe with Dogs

Knowing how to behave safely around your dog – or any other dog you meet – is very important.

It can be hard to work out what dogs feel or think sometimes, as they can't tell us themselves! But their body language can help us understand dogs better.

Happy Dogs

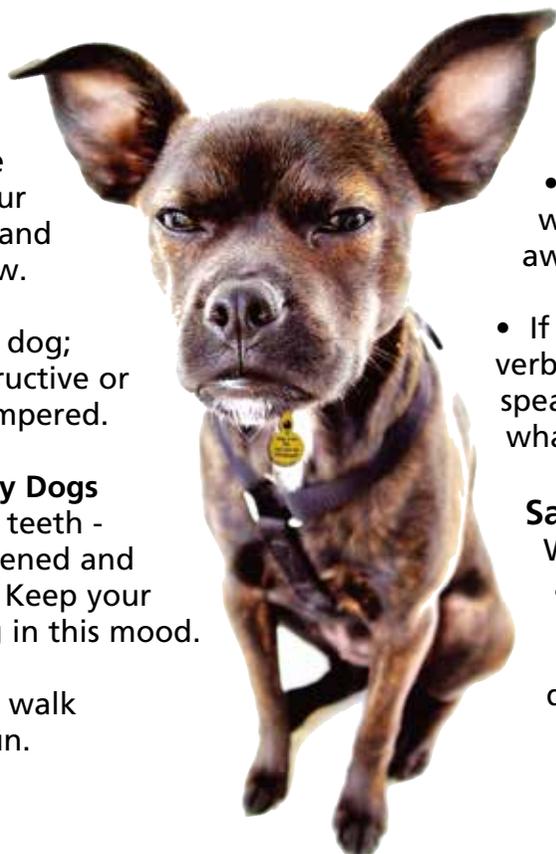
- Have a relaxed body posture and soft features.
- A dog that wants to play may jump around in front of you, play bow at you or bring you a toy to play with.

Attention Seeking

- Attention-grabbing tricks: sitting next to you, putting their face close to yours or in your lap, barking, howling and patting you with a paw.
- Don't just ignore your dog; they can become destructive or frustrated and bad-tempered.

Bad-tempered and Angry Dogs

- Growling or baring its teeth - they might feel threatened and want to be left alone. Keep your distance from any dog in this mood.
- Always keep calm and walk away slowly – don't run.



- Keep your hands in your pockets or cross your arms.
- Try not to look directly at the dog.

Sick Dogs

- Droopy ears and tail.
- Less energetic and 'bouncy' than usual – even grumpy.
- May also lose interest in food.
- A dog can show illness in many different ways, if in doubt talk to your vet.

Frightened Dogs

- Flattened ears, lowered tail or tail between their legs.
- Hiding behind their owner, whining or growling - move away from the dog.
- If your own dog is scared, verbally reassure him; stay calm, speak softly and move away from whatever is making him nervous.

Safety around strange dogs

We've all seen dogs out and about that look friendly, but it's always important to take care with dogs you don't know.

- Never rush up to a strange dog or shout loudly near him – this will scare him and he may react angrily.
- If you can see the owner and want to pet the dog – ask first, then hold out your hand and let him come to you.
- Don't stare into a dog's eyes – as this can be seen by the dog as threatening.
- If a dog growls at you or seems unfriendly, just calmly walk away.
- Don't disturb a dog if he's eating, drinking or has been tied up – and always let sleeping dogs lie.
- If a dog rolls on his tummy you may think that he wants his tummy tickled, but sometimes dogs do this if they are really frightened of you, don't tickle him, but call him to you instead.



Photo by Chris Roberts

Keeping your toddler safe around dogs

As a parent or carer it's important you put steps in place to ensure your child and your dog can live happily together. Making sure your young child knows how to behave around your dog and others will help to keep them safe.



In the house

- Encouraging gentle interaction from your child is important; no pulling, grabbing, hurting or sitting on your dog
- Ensure that your toddler doesn't attempt to snatch your dog's toys. If the dog takes an item belonging to the toddler encourage him to exchange it for another toy or treat.
- Avoid your child wandering around with food or allowing your dog to beg at meal times
- Keep rules consistent, even for visitors

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Out and about

- Never allow your child to approach a strange dog. Remember, not every dog is like your dog at home.
- Supervise your toddler during doggy play time, as there is a higher risk of them being knocked over
- Keep your toddler safe in their pushchair by teaching your dog to walk calmly on a lead next to you, never tie the lead to the pram
- Avoid busy dog parks that may excite your dog or put your toddler at risk



Doggy Dos and Don'ts

Remember every dog is an individual. Knowing what your dog likes and dislikes will help keep them a happy and healthy member of your family.

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Do:

- give your dog quiet time. An indoor kennel or baby gate is a valuable tool.
- avoid 'rough play' with your dog as this may encourage unwanted behaviour, and teach them to play appropriately with toys
- reward good behaviour and calm interactions
- remember your dog has needs too – attention, walking and playing are key to their happiness
- learn about your dog's body language so that you can understand when he's feeling relaxed and happy or tense and uncomfortable

Don't:

- leave your dog alone with your child
- force a dog and toddler relationship, this will grow naturally over time
- leave any doggy dangers lying around - nappies, small toys and certain foods can be hazardous

ED-6913-0414



BLUE FOR PETS CROSS

www.bluecross.org.uk

Sick, injured or homeless pets have relied on us since 1897

Registered charity registered no: 224392 (England and Wales), SC040154 (Scotland).

DOG 25

Your dog and your baby



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The charity dedicated to
helping sick, injured and
homeless pets since 1897.



Your dog and your baby

As soon as you know there is a new baby on the way, you and your family will begin to prepare yourselves for the changes ahead. Your family pet will also need to be prepared for the new arrival, as there will be alterations to the home environment and routine once your baby comes into the house.

Start your preparations early

With a little forward planning, you can get your pet used to the changes well in advance, so that they should hardly notice any difference when your baby actually arrives. You should start to make preparations four months before the birth – don't leave it until your baby has arrived. The whole family can enjoy the benefits that having a pet can bring by following the advice in this leaflet.

Before your baby is born

Handling

Ideally, your dog will already be relaxed and happy about being touched all over their body. However, if your dog gets overly excited when stroked, then you may need to slowly work on this with some gentle handling exercises when they are calm and quiet. If your dog is sensitive about certain areas being touched, then you will have to be mindful of this when your baby becomes more mobile, as a baby's enthusiasm for stroking can easily overwhelm a shy dog.

Sounds

To help prepare your dog for the sounds that babies make, play recordings of a baby crying, gurgling and screaming for short periods during the day. Initially the sound should be barely audible, increasing the volume gradually as your dog grows accustomed to the noises. It's important that your dog feels calm and relaxed with the sounds before

you increase the volume, so remember to take this slowly.

New smells and objects

Get the dog used to baby powder, soaps, shampoos and baby milk by using them at home in the weeks leading up to your baby's arrival. Playpens, cots, pushchairs, highchairs and changing mats should be in place before the baby arrives too.

Exercise

When you walk your dog, think about how much exercise they get, if they pull on the lead, come back when called or whether they're problematic around other dogs. Once your baby arrives you will have to manage any problems while wheeling a pram or pushchair. Also, new mothers may be in some physical discomfort after having a baby, so you will need to make sure that the dog can be physically controlled. If your dog pulls on the lead, you could buy a harness or headcollar (eg a "Gentle Leader") which helps to stop



dogs pulling. It is a good idea to practice walking your dog next to a pushchair before your baby arrives as this will benefit you both – your dog may be a little nervous of it at first, so make sure you use lots of treats to help build their confidence. Don't tie the lead to the pushchair because this could be really dangerous if your dog lunges unexpectedly.

See how often your friends or relatives might be willing to walk your dog while you're still pregnant. This will give you an indication of the amount of exercise they will get if you can't take them out yourself. If you can, walking with your dog and baby is a fantastic way to get you both into a good exercise routine again, and it will provide lots of mental stimulation for everyone. If you think they'll receive shorter or fewer walks once the baby arrives then you need to change the routine a few weeks in advance. If they get fewer walks they will need to use up their energy some other way, otherwise they'll get bored. Bored dogs are not happy, and they may become stressed and destructive. Don't try to make up for fewer walks by giving your dog more food treats. You will only make them overweight and unhealthy. Try to compensate for fewer walks by playing more games with them and consider paying a responsible dog walker to take them out for you.

Training

A well trained dog is a pleasure to live with and when your baby arrives you will



really appreciate it if your dog already knows the basics, such as coming back when called and how to walk on a loose lead. If you feel your dog would benefit from refreshing these important skills, then now is the time to put the effort in as when your baby arrives you are likely to be very busy. Blue Cross only recommends kind reward-based methods of training.

Food

Many accidents occur when babies or toddlers approach a dog's food bowl, or when the baby tries to take a dog's bone or chew. Ensure that your dog is able to eat their dinner and other food items in peace, without fear of being disturbed or pestered. If your dog has a tendency to snatch treats, then now is the time to teach them how to take them gently from your hand.

Attention

Your new baby will take up a lot of your time. You will have visitors to see the baby, including family, friends and health visitors and it's unlikely you will be able to give

your dog the same amount of attention once the baby arrives. Some dogs may find this change particularly difficult, especially if they spend a great deal of time with their owners, so it's a good idea to help prepare them for a new routine as early as possible.

If you intend to keep your dog in a separate area when certain people visit, help your dog get used to this before your baby arrives, by placing them behind a stair gate occupied with a tasty chew a few times a day for several minutes at a time. Gradually and slowly increase the time they spend there, so it becomes an activity that they regularly expect. By the time your baby arrives, you'll find that they are already used to this routine and won't be distressed or confused when they have to be separated from you for short periods of time. Remember that some dogs may enjoy the extra attention they get from visitors, whereas others may become overwhelmed if it is something they are not used to. If your dog is on the nervous side, make sure that they are given a quiet place to retreat to if necessary.

Toys

Dog toys and baby toys are often made of similar materials and some toys even make the same kind of noise, like a squeak. So it's not surprising that some dogs become confused about which toys they can play with!

If you play with your dog inside the house, you may want to start putting their toys away after play, or even reserving play time for the garden or on walks. This will make it easier for your dog to understand that play occurs when you produce their toys, rather than when they pick up a toy in the house. It also prevents the baby from picking up the dog's toys and putting them in their mouth. When the baby arrives, it will then be easier for you to teach your dog to ignore the baby's toys as they have already learnt that play only happens when you produce their toys. If your dog does pick up the baby's toys, avoid becoming angry, as this will only frighten them. It is far better to have taught your dog to "leave" toys prior to the baby's arrival using positive reward methods, to avoid any confusion.

A quiet place to go

Pets should always have a quiet, safe place to go to whenever they need to rest. This will be especially important to them once the baby arrives and eventually begins to toddle about. Dogs will need to be given their own space. Teach your dog to go to a place that makes the dog feel safe and happy (eg a bed in the corner of a room). An indoor kennel (also known as a cage or dog crate) could also be considered for those times when they need peace. When your dog retreats to their safe place, try to ensure that your baby doesn't toddle up to them unexpectedly.

Resting and sleeping places

You should decide if you intend to change where your dog currently rests and sleeps once the baby has arrived. For example, if they lie on your sofa every evening and sleep next to you in bed, are you happy for this to continue? If not, make all changes well in advance so they don't associate the change with the arrival of the baby. If you do decide to change resting areas, make sure that you provide your dog with a really comfortable alternative. It would be too much to expect your dog to sleep in the kitchen overnight if they are used to sleeping in your bed without any preparation, so try to do it in gradual steps to help them adapt to the change.

Health matters

Make sure that your dog is in good physical health. They should also be free from fleas and worms. Any suspicions about illness or developing ailments should be checked out by a qualified veterinary surgeon. Any pain or irritation that the dog experiences will lower their threshold for aggression (ie if they are in pain, they will be less tolerant about being handled and more likely to growl, snap or bite).

How will your pet react?

If your pet has already experienced the arrival of a new baby, and has coped well, you should not have too many problems. However, if this is the first time

they will be living with a new baby, then ask yourself the following questions:

- What sort of relationship will you have with your pet when the baby arrives?
- Once the baby comes, will you want to exclude your pet from certain areas of the house?
- Does your pet have any behavioural problems? If so, they may get worse once a baby has arrived. You should contact your vet for a referral to a pet behaviour counsellor if you need help.

If you are happy with your pet's behaviour, then you can proceed with the general advice given in this leaflet.

After your baby is born

First introductions

When you first come home from hospital with your new baby, your dog will probably be very excited. The best way to carry out this first introduction is when the dog is tired after a long walk and play session. At first, say hello to your dog without the baby in case they get excited and jump up at you. Later, the baby should be introduced in a quiet room where the dog has few associations – not in a place where they usually sleep or eat.

Praise your dog

Associate your baby's presence with positive, enjoyable experiences for your pet. When they are behaving well around the baby, give lots of gentle

praise and tasty tidbits. The first interaction should be under control with the baby being held in a parent's arms and the dog allowed to sniff the child. The dog will appear interested for a few seconds and will then lose interest. When they back away you should praise them and give them a treat.

Carry on with the normal daily duties and routine and the dog should accept the new arrival readily. Pets will be very patient while you adapt to life with a new baby, so don't forget to include them.

Hygiene

People who do not have pets of their own may try and encourage you to rehome your pet due to hygiene. It's essential that your dog is treated for worms and fleas regularly, using products from your vet. Don't leave dirty nappies on the floor, as they can cause the dog to wet or mess on that spot. Nappies can also be appetising for certain dogs, so it is essential that any nappy bin has a sealed lid and is emptied regularly. Use antibacterial soap to clean your hands after feeding, grooming, cleaning or playing with your dog.

Supervision

Do not put your baby on the floor with the dog and never leave your dog unsupervised with a baby, not even for a second. This includes all dogs, even those with an excellent temperament. The use of a screen door or stair gate for your baby's nursery allows you to keep the door shut but still see and hear them.



Toddlers

Your baby will soon start crawling and toddling and it's important for you to remain vigilant once they start to move about on their own. It's especially important to provide the dog with a safe place to rest and relax that's inaccessible to the toddler. This will avoid the situation where the dog is continually followed, cornered and pestered.

Additional information

Blue Cross has a number of leaflets which offer guidance about a whole range of animals and issues.

For further information, see the Be safe with dogs leaflet, and our pet care leaflets, Caring for your adult dog (D3), How to play with your dog (D23) and Training your dog (D16).

Useful addresses

Association of Pet Behaviour
Counsellors (APBC)
PO Box 46 Worcester, WORCS. WR8 9YS
www.apbc.org.uk

Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)
PO Box 17 Kempford, GLOS. GL7 4WZ
www.apdt.co.uk

Happy, healthy pets

Blue Cross advice leaflets are packed full of top tips to help owners with their pet questions. They cover a wide range of topics, from training a puppy to caring for an older cat. So if you need some support to help you with a pet problem, whether it's about a dog or a degu, we're here for you.

You can read and download our leaflets online at www.bluecross.org.uk

Visit our website to take advantage of all its features, including:

- blog posts from Blue Cross experts
- latest news
- events near you
- pets needing new homes

Or you can join in the chat on our online communities:

 www.facebook.com/thebluecrossuk

 www.twitter.com/the_blue_cross

Blue Cross

Blue Cross has been dedicated to the health and happiness of pets since 1897. Abandoned or unwanted, ill or injured – we do what's needed to give every pet a healthy life in a happy home. We're a charity, so the more help you give us, the more help we can give pets.

How you can help

Blue Cross doesn't receive any government funding, so we rely on the generosity of pet lovers like you. There are lots of ways you can help the sick, injured and abandoned pets in our care, like making a donation, fundraising for us or leaving us a legacy.

Please call us on 0300 777 1897 or visit www.bluecross.org.uk



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