

Introducing the “New” Baby to the “Old” Baby

There are several potential issues for homes with a dog already in residence.

- Jealousy: Why is the new baby getting all the attention? That used to be all for me!
- Resource Guarding: These are MY toys, and no one else can play with them, especially that crying, smelly baby!
- Fear and Panic: Save yourself! Run and hide in the quietest place you can find!
- Resentment: That new baby sure seems to get all the love and attention. I get in trouble all the time now and it just doesn't seem fair at all!



Introduction can be done successfully, but you must commit to this!

To keep the types of issues mentioned above from occurring, you, as the dog owner, need to make sure the dog understands that the baby is not a threat. Here are some helpful hints to steer dogs and their owners through this important “introduction” phase.

- As soon as you are aware that there will be a new addition to the family, begin to prepare your family dog. Even a dog that has been through the baby experience before can benefit from some reminding of what is to come.
- It is very important that your dog has a basic obedience course and begin positive training together. This is the first step of many to ensure that your family dog remains a part of your family.
- Many family pets are used to being the baby of the house and may find it difficult to lose this status. If it will be necessary to exclude your dog from certain areas of the house, such as the baby's room, establish these boundaries as soon as possible. If your dog is not used to being left alone, start getting her used to this well before it must actually be enforced.
- Begin exposing your dog to the sights, smells and sounds of a baby. Play tape recordings of baby noises that you have made yourself, or purchased (www.preparingfido.com). Play the tapes in the areas where the baby will normally be so your pet begins to associate the noises with that area. Carry a wrapped-up baby doll in those areas while the tape is playing. Make sure to pet the dog after handling things like baby powder and baby oil to get the dog used to those smells. When you go out for your walks, start taking a stroller along, with the doll inside. Let your dog investigate the baby items, such as a swing, before the baby is using them!
- Develop a routine with your pet, and stick to it. Establish potty times, as well as affection and recreation times. If your dog plays by nibbling or swatting, begin to redirect those behaviors to appropriate toys. If your dog likes to lie in your lap, begin teaching him to lie quietly next to you instead. It is okay for the dog to be on the furniture, if you allow that, but it is important to establish that your lap is now out of bounds.

- Encourage friends and family with infants to visit your home, and let your dog meet small children when you are watching. Always supervise these interactions!
- Make sure arrangements have been made for someone to care for your dog while you are at the hospital. Encourage a dog-friendly neighbor or friend to come to your house to play and walk with your dog.
- Make sure you visit your family veterinarian and have your pet vaccinated and spayed or neutered. Your vet can also direct you to a trainer, and will be able to discuss any training behavior concerns you might have.

The Big Arrival:

When the baby comes home, always associate the dog's interactions with the baby using positive reinforcement. Praise the dog lavishly when he behaves appropriately around the baby. Use a favorite food as treats when your dog demonstrates excellent manners. It is your responsibility to decide what behaviors are acceptable around your baby. Always remember to praise your dog when she follows the rules!

When you arrive home after the birth, your dog will want to greet you. Ask another family member to take the baby in another room while you greet your dog in a warm, but calm, way. Invite the dog to meet the new arrival, but never force him to go near the baby. Once your dog associates the baby with something scary, all the preparation work you've done may be lost. Always supervise any interactions between your dog and your child!

The arrival of a new baby is a hectic time for everyone. Your house is in a state of chaos, and your dog has no idea of what has happened. Make sure, despite all the hectic goings-on, that your dog is given quality time and affection. When you suddenly decrease the amount of attention your dog receives after the baby arrives, the dog will associate this negative turn of events with the baby's arrival. The same goes with excessively scolding or ignoring your pet after the baby's arrival.

No matter how well the interactions between your dog and the baby go, **YOU MUST ALWAYS SUPERVISE!** Never leave your dog and baby alone together. Some simple planning between the family members can easily accomplish a smooth transition from a four-legged baby to a two-legged one. There may be a very good reason why humans take 40 weeks to have their baby. It gives everyone time to get used to the idea, including the family dog.

Congratulations and best of luck with both of the babies!