



Safety Tips For Kids & Pets



Kids and pets are a natural match. After all, what's cuter than a preschooler cuddling a puppy or a toddler's face lighting up in front of a fish tank?

Children's animal attraction is so strong, in fact, that often a baby's first word is the name of her pet.

Aside from adding fun to your family, animals also teach kids about nurturing, companionship, responsibility, and even life and death.



As a parent, you want your child to reap the benefits of raising an animal without any of the problems. The first step: Make sure each of them is safe with the other. Here's how.

Dogs

Every year about 400,000 kids need medical help for dog bites, and about 80 percent of canine bites are from animals that children know well. "Dogs may bite because they're frightened, especially if they're being teased, or because they're protecting their bed, a toy, or their food," says Stephanie Shain, director of outreach for the Humane Society of the United States.

- Teach your child to "be a tree"-to stand still with their hands at their sides and let a dog they don't know sniff them. Explain that if she runs away, the dog may think they are playing and chase them. Tell them to curl up into a ball to protect their face and hands if a dog knocks them down.
- Enroll your dog in an obedience class (you can do it as early as 12

weeks), so he learns not to jump on people and to follow some simple commands, which can help keep him under control around kids.

- Use baby gates to keep your dog in a room away from your child when necessary. A crate, which provides a safe haven for him and protection for your child, can be a very good idea.
- Teach your child to avoid dogs that are growling, baring their teeth, or whose fur is standing on end.
- Instruct them never to stare into a dog's eyes, which can antagonize it.
- Show them how to stroke a pup's back and sides, instead of reaching over their head.
- Never play tug-of-war or wrestle with a dog; roughhousing can trigger a bite.
- To prevent diseases caused by parasites: Leave poop scooping to adults, and bring your pooch for regular veterinary checkups.

Cats

"Unlike dogs, cats typically run away when bothered by a child. A cat will rarely chase anyone who runs away from it," says Shain. "But if a child chases a cat or corners it, the animal may lash out. Your child should learn to just let it go."



- Teach your child that if a kitty flips its tail back and forth quickly, it's more likely to scratch or bite, so avoid it.
- If your child is scratched or bitten by a cat, wash the area well with soap and water, and rinse for at least 30 seconds. If the bite punctured the skin, call your doctor. After a scratch, watch for swollen glands or lingering tenderness at the site over the next two weeks -- signs that your child may need antibiotics.
- Keep your cat indoors to minimize exposure to ticks and fleas and to keep them safe.
- Teach your child not to pick up a cat, but just to pet it gently on the back or behind its ears, and never to bother one that's sleeping or eating.
- Don't let your child handle the litter box.

Birds

- Choose a small, domestic bird, like a cockatiel, parakeet, or canary, which won't hurt your child if it bites him (which is unlikely). These birds are fairly easy to care for and are less likely to spread parasites or bacteria than larger, imported ones.
- Don't let your child hold the bird; if he wants to pet it, you hold it and let him stroke its back.
- The cage should be cleaned daily -- by an adult. Wear rubber gloves, then wash them and your hands thoroughly afterward.

- Teach your child never to tap on the cage or stick any objects into it.

Fish

Tropical fish are among the safest, most colorful, and low-maintenance pets, but even they can present problems. * Tell your child never to put his hands in the tank. The water may contain salmonella or other harmful bacteria. * Don't buy predator fish, such as piranhas. * As with all pet foods (and medicines), store fish food and any chemicals for the tank out of your child's reach. Teach your child not to overfeed fish.

Reptiles

About 3 percent of U.S. homes have a turtle, snake, or lizard, and more than 70,000 people a year contract salmonella from contact with these pets. "Don't believe pet-store certificates that claim an animal is salmonella-free," says Gary Smith, M.D., director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. "A reptile can test negative for salmonella one day and the next day it may show up in its feces." Because salmonella can be especially severe in young children, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends you keep reptiles out of homes with children under 5. If you do have a reptile, keep the animal and its cage away from the kitchen and food.

Hamsters, etc.

Little critters like hamsters, Guinea pigs, and rabbits are gentle -- and easier because the mess is contained in an enclosed space. To keep risks to a minimum:

- Choose your pet carefully -- hamsters, Guinea pigs, and rabbits, for example, enjoy being handled more than gerbils and mice.
- Before you bring an animal home, make sure it has no signs of "wet tail" (wetness near its bottom) or labored breathing; either could mean it has a bacterial infection.
- Handle the animal with your child for at least 15 minutes a day. "Many people regard small pets as 'starter' pets. They put the hamster in the cage, clean the cage once a week, and don't pick the animal up much, so it never gets used to being touched and is more likely to bite or scratch," says Shain.
- Teach your child to hold his pet securely but very gently. "Kids can easily drop or squish a small pet, or pull its fur," says Bonnie Beaver, a veterinarian and professor in the department of small animal clinical sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station. When the pet is being held, offer it a treat -- like a baby carrot or a blueberry -- so it's a pleasant experience.
- Keep the cage in a place where you can supervise the animal -- and your child.

- Avoid ferrets or wild "pets," such as raccoons, chinchillas, and hedgehogs. "Ferrets have been known to attack children," cautions Beaver.

10 Life Lessons Owning a Pet Can Teach Your Child

1. **Responsibility:** Pets require daily feeding, exercise, and affection, not to mention grooming and potty time (and clean-up). Older children can learn how to care for another living creature and even younger children can help with feeding and playtime.
2. **Trust:** It's easy to spill your heart out to your pet, who will offer you unconditional support in return. Pets make wonderful trusted companions for children and can be a first step to helping your child build trust in other relationships, too.
3. **Compassion:** Caring for a pet requires compassion, understanding, and empathy. Kids learn to be kind and to take care of others' basic needs.
4. **Bereavement:** When a pet passes away, your child will inevitably feel the pain of the loss, but in turn will learn how to cope during the bereavement period.
5. **Respect:** Owning a pet teaches children how to respect others. They must touch them gently, tend to their needs, and learn not to disturb them when they're eating or sleeping.
6. **Self-Esteem:** Pets show unconditional love, which can be a great boost to a child's self-esteem. So, too, can the satisfaction that comes from having responsibility and caring for a pet's needs.
7. **Loyalty:** A pet's loyalty toward its owner is often unmatched. In turn, children learn the importance of showing loyalty to their devoted furry friend.
8. **Physical Activity:** Children who own a dog learn how fun physical activity can be while they play tug-of-war, fetch, or go for walks with their pet. Research shows, in fact, that children in dog-owning families spend more time being physically active than children without dogs.²
9. **Patience:** Bonding with a new pet often takes time. Your child will learn patience while your new pet becomes comfortable in your home and also during training.
10. **Social Skills:** Dogs can be an amazing social "ice breaker." Taking your dog for walks as a family can improve your child's social skills as you interact with others. Pets may also help children with autism to develop social skills such as sharing.

Owning a pet can be rewarding and benefits health. Your child can have their basic emotional and physical needs fulfilled by a pet, including comforting contact, love, and affection.

Children growing up with furred animals have a decreased risk for

allergies and asthma which is the opposite of what was thought years ago. Having an animal actually boosts the immune system of children due to increased exposure to allergens.

For More Information:

<https://www.parenting.com/article/kids-and-pets-a-safety-guide>

<https://www.chewy.com/petcentral/5-safety-tips-kids-and-pets/>

<http://www.chicagonow.com/nancys-world/2013/04/owning-pet-health-benefits/>

<https://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2014/11/14/10-pet-ownership-life-lessons.aspx>

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6 SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS & PETS



Give them space!

Some animals do not like to be hugged! Do not disturb pets when they are eating or sleeping.



Play Nice!

Always be calm and gentle when meeting a new pet. Never hit, poke, or squeeze animals.



Be Considerate!

Pets can get scared or anxious. If they do not want to play, give them time to get used to you.



Don't Force them to Share!

Never pull a toy or bone out of their mouth, some pets get bothered when their things are taken!



Don't be Loud!

Animals have sensitive ears, and loud noises like screaming can frighten or even hurt them.



Show Respect!

Pets have feelings just like humans do. Treat them the same way you want people to treat you!



Please make an appointment to discuss your pet's health:



AdobeVets.com
