



## KIDS AND DOGS



When it comes to teaching young children about interacting with animals, there are two things you always need to keep in mind: respect and safety.

The respect part of the equation translates into a child behaving gently and kindly towards animals- no tugging on ears or tails, placing fingers inside mouths, pulling on collars, using the animal as a body pillow, lifting the animal without help from a grownup, or interrupting sleep or meals.

Such respect is not intuitive for most youngsters. It is something that must be taught and carefully supervised- no different than when teaching other important life lessons such as the danger of running into the street.

### What You Can Do

Here are some things you can do to enhance safe and respectful interactions between young children and animals. Feel free to add to the list based on your own experiences:

- Actively teach young children how to interact with animals in a gentle, respectful fashion. Role model this behavior every chance you get.
- Be reminded that every animal is capable of unpredictable behavior. Never leave a young child unsupervised with an animal, even if that animal happens to be the beloved family pet.
- An eating or sleeping animal is wearing a “do not disturb” sign which should be respected.
- If your pet enjoys spending time in a crate or other small, enclosed shelter, consider this to be their sacred space and bar young children from entering.
- Avoid subjecting your pet to unnatural, uncomfortable poses for the sake of a photo!

Source: Petfinder.com