



BRINGING HOME A NEW BABY

Tips for Preparing Your Dog for Baby's Arrival



IF YOU ARE EXPECTING A BABY AND YOU HAVE A DOG, TAKE TIME NOW TO PREPARE YOUR DOG FOR YOUR NEW ARRIVAL.

Most dogs are fine with children, but some can become concerned with newborns. For example, some dogs think you have captured something. They see something squirming and hear high cries. Some dogs feel shunned when their owners suddenly shift their focus from them to the baby. And, some may begin attention-seeking behaviours (barking, chewing, jumping or digging in the yard).

Here are some tips to help you prepare your dog for the big day and will help rescue inappropriate behaviours to ease your stress and keep your baby safe.

SET NEW RULES BEFORE THE BABY ARRIVES

Set your rules, stick to them, and be consistent in enforcing them. This way your dog will not associate exclusions with the baby's arrival. For example, you may want to consider no go zones, such as the baby's nursery or your bedroom.

PREPARE YOUR DOG FOR BABY'S ARRIVAL

Get your dog used to having a baby around. Purchase a doll that cries, wrap it in a blanket, and carry it around in your arms. This will allow you to assess your dog's reactions. Use the same baby products (powder, shampoo, lotion) that you will use on your baby. Once the baby is born, try to bring the hospital blanket or the baby's skull cap for your dog to get to know the scent.

AFTER THE BABY ARRIVES TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE SAFETY

Consider putting the dog in the crate when you need time alone with the baby. Thoroughly dispose of nappies. Keep your dog away from the baby's head. Do not let your dog have or steal the baby's toys. Allow your dog to sniff where the baby has been instead of the baby itself. Do not allow your dog to jump on you when you are holding the baby. If your dog reacts badly to the baby, contact a Bark Busters Behavioural Therapist to help you through this transition.

Above all, never leave the dog alone with the baby.

HANDLING THE FUTURE

Before you know it, your baby will be crawling and grabbing at things. Dogs view children as they would young puppies. Dogs can be possessive of food, toys, their bed or crate. Some dogs may growl or snap when the baby gets too close. Don't take the risk. Separate them and manage the situation. Teach your young child not to pull your dog's ears or tail, and to stay away from its food. Do not allow your child to chastise, hit or chase the dog. Do not allow your child to approach the dog while it is eating. Do not allow your child to take a toy or something out of your dog's mouth. Never hit your dog as this could cause your child to emulate you and that could cause a bite.

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