

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW BORN TO YOUR DOG

The following are helpful steps for introducing your new born to your dog. Do not wait to begin or refresh on obedience training. Reestablish your role as the pack leader and reinforce common commands for your dog. Remember that your dog can sense and feel your anxiousness, excitement or worries.

1. Obedience training is critical to having your dog stay well-behaved around your new baby. At a minimum he needs to know "sit", "stay", "off" (or "down"), and "leave it" - these are all going to come in handy as you juggle both the baby and the dog. If you will be walking your dog as you push your baby's stroller, we also suggest you learn "heel" and walking at heel. This is going to be useful.
2. You established yourself as the unwavering pack leader and your wife in charge of the pack as well.
3. Smells are important to dogs. This is how dogs identify other animals and people. So before your baby comes home, bring home a blanket from the hospital that has the baby's scent all over it. Do NOT let the dog attack or eat the blanket though! It should learn that the baby equals calm.
4. When you bring the baby home, you should greet the dog calmly and normally. You need to have your dog in a calm submissive mode before the introduction. You can establish this calmness by first exercising your dog. Then have a 3rd party introduce the baby. This prevents a "shock" at first.
5. You set clear boundaries, letting the dog know the new baby is yours and only afterwards giving him permission to approach.
6. Established boundaries around the nursery, starting with the nursery off-limits.
7. Only allow your dog to explore and sniff certain things in the room-with your supervision and you decide when the dog needs to leave - you are the pack leader and always in charge.
8. Repeat as necessary so that your dog knows this room and the baby in it belongs to you, the pack leader, and must be respected at all times.
9. For praise, learn the art of calm praise. It's fine to go all hyper and energetic with a dog normally. They love it. But for now, get your dog used to calm praise and love so it doesn't get hyper around the baby.
10. Keep the dog's routine as normal as possible. Dogs are creatures of habit and need the stability they have grown accustomed to.
11. Make sure to include your dog in your activities with the baby. It needs to learn it has a new pack member, and is expected to behave around it.
12. Do not mix dog toys and baby toys, or let the dog play with the baby's things. It will help train the dog to keep things separate.
13. If your dog starts misbehaving, chances are it needs more attention and assurance it is still a valued pack member.
14. Above all keep this in mind: you now have a bigger family full of more love. It's a great thing so keep the positive attitude going with everything you do with your dog. He will follow your enthused lead.

Remember with proper introductions and preparation, your entire family with your dog and new born can all live happily together. Your child's safety comes first. If necessary, do not hesitate to hire a professional to work with you. If, after working with a professional and on your own; you are still not able to be 100% in charge and your dog does not respect the baby, then you must seriously think about speaking with the breeder to help find your dog another home. The safety of all is what comes first.