



PREPARE YOUR DOG FOR YOUR NEW BABY

Once you have established leadership in your pack, your dog typically will not get stressed about changes that occur in your household. If the leader is calm, the dog will be calm. However, inconsistencies that may happen when the baby arrives will be viewed by your dog as a sign of weakness. Bad behavior may resurface (barking, rushing the door, chewing, digging) or new problems may arise. This is due to the dog being stressed and seeing the need for someone to take charge of the pack, so the dog takes on the job of "top dog."

The following are some guidelines to help you start off on the right foot. Remember, babies and small children should ***never*** be left with a dog or puppy without adult supervision.

1. **Set new rules before baby arrives.** For instance, if you decide to keep your dog out of the baby's room, implement this several weeks or months before the baby arrives. Thus, your dog will not associate the baby's arrival with exclusion from the room. Also, try to introduce an erratic schedule so the dog does not know when it will get walked, fed or played with.
2. **Prepare your dog for baby's arrival.** You can get your dog used to the new sights and smells it will soon be encountering by doing things such as buying an inexpensive doll, wrapping it in baby clothes or a blanket and holding it in your arms as you walk throughout the house. Use the same baby products (powder, shampoo, lotion) that you will use on the baby.

Try to bring home the baby's blanket or skull cap prior to your baby's arrival to allow your dog to become accustomed to his scent.

3. **Make introductions on the first day the baby arrives home.** Your dog will need to "touch scent" the baby to find out what it is. Hold your newborn up high and let your dog sniff the baby's bottom or feet while another adult controls the dog on a loosely held leash. If the dog misbehaves or is too exuberant, correct the dog's behavior. Allow frequent, supervised visits by your dog.
4. The more the dog and baby are together, the better and less stressed your dog will be. However, **neither newborn nor toddler should ever be left unattended** in the same room with your dog.
5. **In regard to possessions.** Your dog will not know the difference between its toys and your child's toys until you teach it.
 - a. If and only if you catch your dog chewing on something unsuitable, interrupt the behavior with a BAH. Then give it an acceptable chew toy and praise it lavishly when it takes the toy in its mouth.
 - b. Dogs can be possessive about their food, toys and space. Although it is normal for a dog to be possessive, it is **NOT** acceptable for it to growl or snap at you or your child. At the same time, children need to learn to respect their dog as a living creature that is not to be teased or purposefully hurt and that needs time to itself. If your dog is growling or snapping at your child for any reason, the situation needs IMMEDIATE attention. (Please call your local Bark Busters behaviorist/trainer for further instruction.)

HAPPY DOGS = HAPPY FAMILIES