



Jasper County Animal Rescue League and Humane Society
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Bringing Home a New Baby

The arrival of a new baby is an exciting time for every parent. It brings a lot of changes to a household not only for other human family members, but for a pet family member as well.

How do things change for my pet?

Pets view the world a little differently than humans. They rely quite a bit on all their senses especially scent and hearing. Your pet can identify you and your home by its familiar smell. The familiar smell and noise level of your home are comforting to your pet. So all the new smells and sounds a baby brings can disrupt the pet's familiar picture of home. In addition many new parents are very busy with the new baby and other life activities and the pet may experience less interactive time with his people then before the baby arrived.

How can I help my pet deal with the changes?

With a little patience, work and love your pet will accept the new baby into the family.
Before the baby arrives:

- Get your pet used to some of the smells a baby brings to the home. Rub baby lotion or powder on your hands and let the pet investigate. Praise and treat the pet while he is experiencing the new smell.
- If possible tape record the sounds of a baby and play it for the pet. Remember to praise and treat the pet while listening to the baby sounds.
- If you can, "borrow" a baby from a friend or relative to practice a real life session. When the pet is around the baby, praise and treat the pet. Talk happy so the pet associates positive things with the baby's presence.

Once the baby has arrived?

- Don't exclude the pet. Let him be around when you are feeding, bathing or changing the baby.
- Smile and talk happy to the pet. If all the pet hears is negative around the baby like "no, don't or get down", the pet will associate negative things with the baby's presence.
- Schedule interactive play time with the pet to avoid him getting lost in the commotion. This time should be without the baby.
- Provide a special place for your pet to retreat to like his kennel. Place soft bedding material and some toys there.
- Try to keep the pet's routine as normal as possible, make necessary changes to their routine long before the baby arrives. This includes retraining the pet to any areas that will be off limits once the baby comes. Examples might include your lap or the nursery if you choose.

With a little time and effort, your new arrival can be exciting for everyone involved.