

# **Dogs and Babies**

It is a very common request to be asked to rescue a dog because there is a new baby in the house. One of the most frustrating things is that in the majority of these cases, the dog had a problem before the baby came and the owners didn't do anything about it. So the poor dog is rehomed needlessly when a bit of preparation would have prevented it.

It is a rare luxury in life to know in advance that a major change is going to happen to your circumstances. In these cases, you have up to 9 months in which to prepare the dog, so do it!

## **THE MAIN POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

- \* The dog won't be welcome to sleep on your bed or even in your bedroom.**
- \* You don't want a dog who jumps on and off the furniture when it pleases, it could leap straight on top of the baby one day.**
- \* Your dog must be safe to take toys and chews from.**
- \* Your dog must respond to basic commands properly, you can't be carrying a baby around and have a dog who completely ignores you and won't move out of your way.**
- \* A dog who jumps up at you could easily injure a carried baby, or knock it out of your arms.**
- \* Dogs must learn to "go away" on command so that they don't come up to you when you have a baby on your knee and put a paw straight on top of the baby or drop a toy on it.**
- \* There are times when you might need to leave a room with the baby and leave the dog behind. Make sure your dog already accepts being left in one room whilst you are elsewhere in the house.**
- \* Take your dog walking with the babies new stroller for a month before the baby arrives.**
- \* Practice lots of sit and down stays.**
- \* Walk around the house with a baby Doll in your arms,(one that cries would be a plus) cooing and making baby talk sounds.**
- \* Dogs are fascinated by new smells, so send something home from the hospital immediately that smells of the baby so that when the baby actually comes, it isn't so much of a novelty.**

**\* Getting up in the middle of the night and walking around with the doll.**

**\* If your dog loves to ride in the car then put the child seat where you want it and teach the dog to sit or lie near by but never in it.(put a doll in the seat).**

Anything you can think of so your dog will be ready.

Common sense, really, but so many people just think of how pleasant their dog is, how sociable it is with kids, and forget the practicalities of having a dog and baby together. If your dog has any sort of temperament problem before your new baby comes, it will be much worse when there is a baby at risk. So use the luxury of knowing that baby is coming and sort out the dog now. The dog will not understand that suddenly when you walk through the door with your baby he now can't jump up at you or leap on the sofa.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. What puts a lot of owners off is asking for help to prepare their dog when it has any sort of aggression problem. They fear being told to rehome the dog or put it to sleep. In fact this is unlikely, but even if this is the outcome, you wouldn't want to be responsible for ducking out on the issue now and then later your baby or dog pays the price.

Ask for help!

**For more on this subject, click to [Finding The Right Puppy](#).**

**For information on dog bite safety for children and bite behavior, click to [The Community Dog](#).**