



## BARK U Education Sheet: Introducing a New Dog or Puppy to Your Children

### Why Proper Introductions Matter



Adding a new dog or puppy to your home can be an exciting experience, but it's important to introduce your new pet to your children in a thoughtful and structured way. Proper introductions help set the foundation for a positive relationship between your new dog and your children.

### Preparing for the Introduction

#### Before Bringing the Dog or Puppy Home:

##### 1. Teach Your Children About Dogs:

- **Respect Boundaries:** Explain that dogs have their own experiences and feelings and may not always want attention.
- **Gentle Touch:** Practice how to pet softly and avoid pulling tails, ears, or fur.
- **Calm Energy:** Encourage children to use calm voices and avoid sudden movements around the dog.
- **Introduce Consent:** It can be helpful to teach kids about the “two second rule” of petting to make sure the dog can move away when they feel uncomfortable. Teach your children to pet for two seconds and then stop. If the dog leans in for more, pet again for two seconds but if the dog doesn't actively seek attention, displays stress signals, or tries to move away, then the petting must end.





- **Understand Safety:** Teach children if the dog or puppy begins to chase or nip them, they should stop moving and stand tall like a tree. They can feed the dog treats with a flat palm like a plate to avoid nibbling teeth. Most importantly, they should be taught to never put their face in the dog's face.

## 2. Set Up a Safe Space for Your Dog:

- Create a quiet area with a crate or bed where your new dog can relax and feel safe. This is especially important for puppies, who may get easily overwhelmed.

## 3. Set Rules and Expectations:

- Establish family rules for interacting with the new dog, such as no climbing on the dog, no chasing them, and respecting their safe zone.

## The First Meeting

### Step-by-Step Guide for a Successful Introduction:

#### 1. Start in a Calm Environment:

- Have the first meeting in a quiet room or fenced yard with minimal distractions.

#### 2. Let the Dog Set the Pace:

- Allow the dog to approach the children at their own pace. Avoid forcing the interaction, as this can create fear or stress.

#### 3. Use a Leash for Control:

- Keep the dog on a leash initially, so you can gently guide and manage the interaction.





#### 4. Teach Calm Greetings:

- Show children how to stand or sit quietly, letting the dog sniff them. Praise and reward your dog for calm behavior.

#### 5. Reward Positive Behavior:

- Use treats and praise to reward your dog when they remain calm around the children.

## Building a Positive Relationship

### Supervision is Essential:

- **Always Supervise Interactions:** Never leave children and dogs unsupervised, no matter how well-behaved they seem.
- **Recognize Warning Signs:** Teach your children to respect signals like growling, turning away, or moving to their safe space. These are signs the dog is feeling uncomfortable.

### Encourage Positive Interactions:

- **Teach Children How to Play:** Encourage structured games like fetch, rather than roughhousing.
- **Practice Polite Behavior Together:** Have the children help with simple cues like "sit" or "touch" to build trust and cooperation.

### Provide Your Dog with Breaks:

- **Safe Zones Are Key:** Ensure your dog has a quiet area they can retreat to if they feel overwhelmed. Teach children that this space is off-limits.

## Tips for a Smooth Transition

- **Set Realistic Expectations:** Children should understand that a new dog may take time to adjust to their new home and family.



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- **Keep Interactions Short:** Limit initial interactions to a few minutes and gradually increase as your dog becomes more comfortable.
- **Teach Responsibility:** Involve older children in age-appropriate tasks, like filling the water bowl or helping with training sessions.

## Creating a Safe and Happy Household

By teaching your children how to respect and interact with your new dog appropriately and by helping your dog feel safe and supported, you're setting everyone up for a positive and lasting relationship.

If you notice signs of stress, fear, or aggression during interactions, stop immediately and contact a professional trainer for guidance. With time, patience, and proper management, your dog and children can develop a strong bond and enjoy a lifetime of companionship.



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