



Has Fluffy Always Been An Only Child?

By Maya Richmond

If your dog or cat is used to being your only “baby,” and now will have to share you with a “new addition,” it would be best to start preparing your pet when you first find out you are expecting, rather than waiting until you bring your new bundle of joy home from the hospital. Your pet will have so many new things he will need to become acclimated with, such as new smells and objects in his home. Below are some suggestions and tips you can use to make the transition easier for the “entire” family.

- Set up the nursery months ahead of time. Pets are very sensitive to changes and will need time to adjust.
- Put up a “baby gate” to keep Fluffy from off-limit areas. Make sure your pet has his own special place to retreat to. If you allow your dog to sleep in your bed, get him used to sleeping in his own bed before the baby arrives.
- Begin sprinkling some baby powder on the carpet or rubbing baby oil on yourself. This will help him to become accustomed to the new smells now, making the transition easier when you bring your new baby home.
- Overly dependent pets may compete with a baby for attention. Build your dog’s confidence through obedience training.
- Always praise your pets for good, calm behavior. Never punish; prevent the behavior in the first place.

Above all, remember to show your dog lots of love and affection so that he views your baby as a positive addition. This will help to ensure a happy and healthy environment for you and your “babies.” And lastly, **never leave your baby unattended around your dog, no matter how well adjusted he appears to be. Always have supervision!** ■



Maya Richmond is Executive Director of the Animal Welfare Association (AWA) located in Voorhees, NJ. AWA operates a public spay/neuter and basic wellness clinic. For more information call 856-424-2288 or visit www.awanj.org.

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 ACCT Philly
 All They Need is Love
 Animal Adoption Center
 Associated Humane Society
 Camden County Animal Shelter
 Cumberland County SPCA
 Liberty Humane Society
 Pennsylvania SPCA
 Pugs Unlimited Gives Shelter
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