



RABBITS AND CHILDREN – ENSURING A PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Some Things to Consider About Rabbits as Pets for a Child:

Because they are prey animals, rabbits can perceive children as threatening. Children are loving by nature. However, “loving” to a small child often means holding, cuddling and carrying a rabbit which makes the rabbit feel insecure and frightened. This doesn’t mean that rabbits and children cannot happily coexist together. It is important that children and their parents learn how to properly interact with a rabbit so that both can bond and enjoy each other’s company.

Choosing the Right Rabbit for Your Child/Children:

- **Size & Temperament:** When considering a pet rabbit for a toddler or very young child, it has been suggested that getting a very large rabbit is best. A large rabbit is much harder to pick up or manipulate for a small child than a medium or small rabbit. Because most rabbits do not really enjoy being picked up and handled by people, pairing a large rabbit with a small child reduces the chance that the child will be picking up and/or handling the rabbit. Larger rabbits also tend to be more docile and slower to react in stressful situations.
- **Allergies:** Make sure your child is not allergic to rabbits. Rabbits, cats, chinchillas, ferrets and other small animals groom themselves using their own salivary secretions. It is the saliva from the groomed hair that is actually causing the allergy, so even if your child is not allergic to dogs or other mammals, they may still be allergic to rabbits.

Children and Bringing Bunny Home: Understandably, bringing a new rabbit home is a very exciting event for a child. However, it is important that they remain calm, aloof and “hands off” for the first few hours, or sometimes days, as the rabbit acclimates to its new surroundings. Again, supervision is important at this stage of rabbit ownership.