



Integrating with Pets:

Let's face it – before your actual baby came along your fur baby *was* your baby. It's natural that you want them to be the best of friends and love each other. However, both dogs and children can be unpredictable, so it is worth investing some time and energy before your baby comes along to make sure everyone is prepared.

Full disclosure: I do not have a dog! The information below has been gleaned through various reputable sources and consultations with dog experts and local trainers.

The American Kennel Club recommends the following actions to help prepare your dog for baby's arrival:

- Your dog should have gone through a **basic obedience class** that teaches: no jumping, sit, down, stay, and comes when you call
- **Make gradual changes** to the dog's routine (i.e. where he sleeps or when he gets walked) beforehand so that any changes are not associated with the new baby
- **Decrease time and attention** you give your dog a few weeks before baby arrives
- Expose your dog to various **baby sounds** (crying, grunts, happy sounds etc) to help the dog adjust to the new normal

- Acclimate your dog to **baby smells**, including any lotions or creams, detergents, products etc. Once baby is born – bring a used baby blanket home so the dog recognizes the scent
- Consider a **'go to' place** – a defined dog bed or mat that's transferrable to other locations and train the dog to go and stay there
- Upon returning from the hospital – **greet the dog alone** so they don't jump on baby
- Allow dog to adjust to the baby **from afar** before bringing them in for a closer introduction
- Keep the dog **controlled on a leash** for the first interactions
- **Watch the dog's response** when baby makes sudden movements or sounds
- **Keep baby elevated** at first and make sure there's an adult between the baby and dog
- Give the dog lots of **attention when baby is around**. Show him good things happen when baby is around
- **Teach your baby 'gentle touches' early – no pulling tails or ears**
- **Have 'safe zones' for the dog – a private space where the dog can go when the activity is too much**
- **It is OK to keep the dog out of the baby's room** especially if the is curious and attempts to jump on the crib or changing table.

Dog Warning Signs to Watch for:

- Wide-eyed stare
- Stiffened posture
- Furrowed brow
- Ears pulled back
- Tense, tightly closed jaw