



CATS AND KIDS

Growing up with pets is a marvelous experience. Kids can learn to treat animals with respect, something they can carry with them to adulthood. Here are a few tips to help promote a positive relationship between children and cats.

Teach children how to properly handle a cat.

Cats should **not** be picked up by the scruff of the neck. Instead, support the cat's hindquarters in one hand and use the other to support its chest. Hold the cat gently but securely close to your body.

Supervise kids and cats.

This is especially important with a new pet, which may still be nervous. Teach children to respect the cat, and do not allow them to chase or corner the cat, even in play. The cat may bite if it feels threatened. Encourage calm, unthreatening interactions between kids and cats.

Learn and practice good cat handling.

- Always pick a cat up with one hand supporting its chest and the other supporting its hind legs. A cat can also perch with her front legs on your shoulder, but be sure to support her back legs with your arm or hand
- If a cat struggles or tries to get away, let go
- If a cat's ears are flat and its tail is lashing, then it's not happy and should be left alone
- Most cats do not like their tummy touched. It may frighten her, and she might bite
- If a cat is sleeping, eating or using the litter box, leave her alone

Do not allow children to disturb a sleeping or eating cat.

Also give kitty some space when she is using her litter box.

Do not allow teasing or rough play.

Teasing and rough play encourages your cat to use its teeth and claws on you. Instead, play with your cat using cat toys (commercial or those of your own making, for example: many cats love to play with a simple paper bag or cardboard box).

Teach children how important it is to keep your cat indoors.

Ensure that they understand the importance of making sure kitty does not accidentally run out the door. Indoor cats live much safer, healthier lives.