

Introducing a New Baby - Top Tips

Prepare your Dog Before Your Baby Arrives

BABY DOLL WORK

Get your dog used to you having something small and precious in your arms while walking about.

Habituation is the key here. Don't make a fuss about it. Make it a normal thing for your dog, by doing it all the time. Talk to it, sing to it and change it. Make all these sounds and movements normal for your dog.

GET EVERYTHING READY A MONTH IN ADVANCE

Get the dog used to mess, toys, and nappies everywhere. Babyfood, wipes, cream and bottled milk to the side, off limits. Make the sounds of squeaky toys and the jingle of mobiles. Play sounds of babies crying. When baby arrives, your dog will not be hit with all these changes at once.

LEAD WALKING WITH A BUGGY

If your dog doesn't already walk nicely on lead, you're not going to be able to walk your dog when you take your child out in the buggy. You will be so busy with your child, that it is unlikely you will be able to take time to walk your dog at all.

You will have to get someone else to walk your dog, pay a dog-walker, or get a trainer in to get your dog walking nicely on a loose leash, beside a buggy. Get this done before you have precious cargo in the buggy. Then, your dog can have quality time with you too, when you head out for walks.

Never leave your baby and your dog together, unsupervised. If you cannot supervise, then separate

Create Safe Spaces for both your Dog and your Baby

Putting your highly mobile dog in a crate and giving your highly immobile baby the run of the house, doesn't make sense and is not fair on your dog. Create safe zones for baby changing, feeding, playing, sleeping. Use height, baby pens, barriers etc. It is well worth it to let your dog come and go as normal and get used to their new little housemate.

Create Friendships that Last a Lifetime

Friendships that last a lifetime aren't built in days, but in weeks, months and years. Remember, at first, your baby will seem like a furless baby rabbit to your dog. Becoming more human over time. Babies' smells, movements and vocalisations change over time too. Don't panic and don't rush things. Dogs need time to get used to the existence of the new baby and all these regular changes,

