



# ANIMAL ADOPTION CENTER

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## KIDS AND DOGS

When it comes to teaching young children about interacting with animals, there are two things you always need to keep in mind: respect and safety.

The respect part of the equation translates into a child behaving gently and kindly towards animals- no tugging on ears or tails, placing fingers inside mouths, pulling on collars, using the animal as a body pillow, lifting the animal without help from a grownup, or interrupting sleep or meals.

Such respect is not intuitive for most youngsters. It is something that must be taught and carefully supervised- no different than when teaching other important life lessons such as the danger of running into the street.

### What You Can Do

Here are some things you can do to enhance safe and respectful interactions between young children and animals. Feel free to add to the list:

- Actively teach young children how to interact with animals in a gentle, respectful fashion. Role model this behavior every chance you get.
- Be reminded that every animal is capable of unpredictable behavior. Never leave a young child unsupervised with an animal, even if that animal happens to be the beloved family pet.
- An eating or sleeping animal is wearing a “do not disturb” sign which should be respected.
- If your pet enjoys spending time in a crate or other small, enclosed shelter, consider this to be their sacred space and bar young children from entering.
- Avoid subjecting your pet to unnatural, uncomfortable poses for the sake of a photo!