

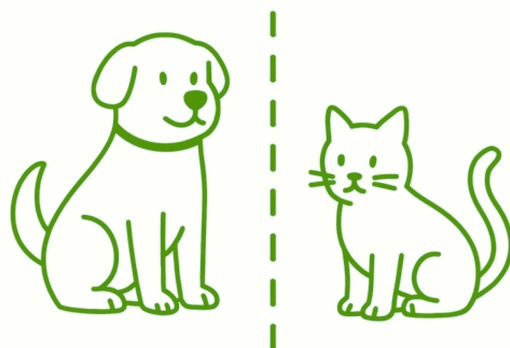
# INTRODUCING KITTENS TO DOGS

Introducing a kitten to your resident dog(s) takes time, patience, and close supervision to ensure a safe and positive experience for everyone. Rushing the process can lead to fear, stress, or even conflict, which may impact their relationship long-term. That's why it's important to go at a pace that allows both your dog and kitten to feel safe and comfortable.

This step-by-step guide is designed to help you through the process, from the very first sniff to a peaceful coexistence. With the right approach, your pets can build trust, set healthy boundaries, and eventually form a happy bond.

## Step 1: Complete Separation

- Set up a separate room for the kitten that your dog cannot access. This provides the kitten a chance to adjust to their new environment without added stress.
- Begin scent swapping by allowing your dog to sniff the kitten's blanket, toys, or empty carrier. This helps both animals get familiar with each other's scent in a low-stress way.



## Step 2: Controlled Visual Introduction

After a few days, use baby gates, crates, or playpens to allow your dog and kitten to see one another without direct contact.

- Observe your dog's behavior closely:
  - ✓ Normal curiosity (watching, sniffing, tail wagging) is a good sign.
  - ✗ Concerning behavior (barking, lunging, intense staring, lip licking) means they are overstimulated or overly fixated.
- If concerned, keep them separated and redirect your dog with calm activities near the barrier, such as:
  - Licking a stuffed Kong
  - Chewing a bone
  - Obedience training using treats



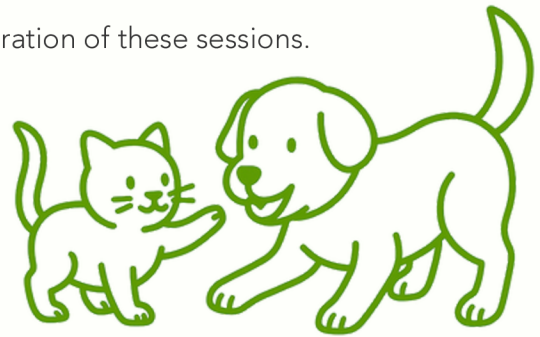
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## Step 3: Supervised Interaction (Leashed Dog)

- If your dog remains calm and responsive, allow the kitten to explore the room while your dog stays leashed and under control.
- Keep sessions short at first (5–10 minutes).
- Use treats to keep your dog focused on you. Practice commands like “sit,” “down,” “place,” and “leave it” to reinforce calm behavior.
- Most kittens will keep their distance at first—respect their pace.

## Step 4: Gradual Increase in Freedom

- As both animals grow more comfortable, increase the duration of these sessions.
- If all interactions remain calm, you can eventually allow the dog to be off-leash under close supervision. Before allowing them off-leash, start with keeping the leash on and allowing it to drag. This allows for you to quickly pick it up if necessary.
- Continue to use commands and reward calm behavior around the kitten.
- Always supervise interactions even when you are confident both animals are safe together.



### Important Reminders

- Never force interactions, let the kitten approach at their own pace.
- Ensure your kitten has safe escape routes and elevated resting spots.
- Always reinforce calm, relaxed behavior in your dog.
- If at any point the dog becomes too fixated or the kitten seems fearful, return to the previous step.

With time, patience, and consistency, most dogs and kittens can learn to coexist and often become great companions. Start with slow, supervised introductions and reward calm behavior. With positive reinforcement and a safe environment, curiosity can grow into trust and a lasting bond.