



Introducing your dog or puppy to your home

Before bringing a new puppy or dog into the family, we strongly recommend that all family members have visited them, at least once, wherever you are getting them from.

Look at your home from a dog's perspective and make sure that items you value are kept out of reach. A dog will explore every corner of your home and anything they can reach will be thoroughly investigated and quite possibly chewed!

Preparing the house

- Clear low surfaces, such as coffee tables.
- Check for trailing electric wires and secure them out of reach.
- Keep household cleaning products (e.g. bleach and disinfectant) in a secure cupboard.
- Your dog's kibble must be kept in cool dry conditions – and it must be in a place that is 100% dog proof.
- Set up the dogs 'safe space' e.g. Crate in the kitchen with a baby gate across the door for separate dog and child areas.
- Shoes, which are always a favourite with puppies, should be stored in a safe place.
- House plants are also a great source of temptation, and as some plants are toxic to dogs, they need to be kept well away (see Poisonous Plants and Food factsheet)
- There are also a number of food items and medications which are very harmful to dogs, so these must be stored out of reach (see Poisonous Plants and Food factsheet).
- You may also feel that you need to ensure the dog doesn't take any of your child's toys. Are they allowed upstairs for example? Or can we practise tidying toys away before pup arrives?

Preparing children

Before your puppy or dog comes home, think about what motivates your children. Will your child be excited by buying the equipment with you before your dog comes home? Or even just putting pictures of the dog around the home before his or her arrival? Get them involved with setting up the dog's safe space, making signs or pictures for it.

It is very useful to try to have an idea of how children may react to the dog coming home; are they likely to be nervous, or confident and want to interact, so you can be prepared.

Resources such as social stories, comic strips, hand puppets and timelines could also help in communicating the introduction of a new dog or puppy to your child. **Remember the Kennel Club Safe and Sound Scheme, and other resources discussed in workshops to help teach children how to appropriately interact with the dog once they arrive home.**



Preparing the garden

The fencing in your garden must be a suitable height, and it must be secure. Gate fastenings should also be checked, and if you have a garden shed you need to ensure that it is kept locked to prevent investigation of toxic products such as weed killer or slug pellets. You may decide to set aside an area of the garden to be used for toileting, which can be useful if trained in the correct manner.

House rules

Before your new dog or puppy arrives home, it is a good idea to sit down as a family and decide on some 'house rules' for your new arrival. Several people each using different cues and allowing different behaviour can be very confusing for a dog. Consistency will help your dog to be confident of what is expected of them. Consider what tasks you may want the dog to do in the future as well as the 'now' situation.

Other pets

If you have another pet already in the home, we advise that you seek individual advice through **the Family Dog Team** (see Introducing dogs and cats handout in our members area for more info). Here are some rough guidelines:

- Scent swap between individuals through stroking one then the other, swapping bedding etc.
- Provide extra resources (water bowls, beds, toys etc.)
- Don't leave newly introduced animals alone until you are confident that they are getting on
- Do not allow your dog or puppy to chase cats
- When bringing a new dog home, introduce on neutral grounds before bringing into the house.

Visitors

As hard as it is, it is important to resist the temptation of inviting friends and relatives to meet the new arrival—you should concentrate on making the transition from one home to another as calm and stress-free as possible.



Once your dog or puppy has settled in their new home and you have visitors, encourage your dog into their safe space with a KONG or similar good chew while you let the visitors in. After initial greetings between people and when it is calm, encourage people to sit down and let the dog out to approach the visitors in their own time, giving everyone a treat to give to the dog when they come to say hello.

Arriving home

The day your dog arrives in his new home is exciting for you, but it can be very daunting for a dog that will have to get used to new surroundings, and especially a puppy who is having to cope without their mother and littermates for the first time. Concentrate on making the transition from one home to another as calm and stress-free as possible and start the '**settling in**' phase.

- To begin with, take your dog into the garden and give them a chance to explore.
- If your dog toilets, so much the better. This will give you the opportunity to praise them, marking the start of the housetraining process.
- Show your dog their 'safe space', chews and toys.
- Allow your dog to explore the rooms where they are allowed access. Your new dog needs to explore their 'new world' in their own time before they can begin to feel safe.

When children are meeting a dog or puppy

- Get the children to sit on the floor if meeting a puppy, as puppies can be very wriggly and you do not want to risk the puppy being dropped from a height.
- Give each of the children a treat and let the puppy/dog meet each child in turn and take the treat.
- When the children are on their feet, try to limit them running or waving their arms about when the dog is with them, as this could encourage the dog to jump up, play bite, or chase them.

When you have the dog or puppy in your home

- Supervise interactions with the puppy/dog. Referring to the workshop information and your pre-prepared list of 'useful interventions' to manage any difficult situations.
- Teach children how to play appropriately with the dog, but as children are children - they must always be supervised. Make sure the game does not get too boisterous, as you want everyone to remain calm and quiet. Refer to your mental enrichment games that were discussed throughout the workshops; setting up hide-and-seek games with treats for example is much more appropriate than a game of tug-of-war.
- **The dog will now be entering a settling in phase and will need time to adjust to make sure they are able to take on their Family Dog Service role. See 'Settling your dog in to a therapeutic role'.**