

# Humane Society of West Michigan

## Introducing Your New Dog to Other Pets

### Dog to Dog

You are off to a good start as most likely the dogs already met at our shelter, but before you go outside, take a short walk with your dogs to help reduce stress. Arguments often occur when entering territory, going through doors or gates, in tight spaces, around food, toys, beds, games and over your attention. Fights can be avoided by giving the dogs time and space to get to know each other calmly. Keep the leash on the new dog and but do not restrain or tighten the leash. Do not give either dog attention until both are quiet and well behaved. It can help to increase praise to your current dog whenever the new dog approaches.

**Important!** Do not feed the dogs next to each other. Refrain from giving either dog a long lasting treat, as this can easily lead to fighting. Wait until they are accustomed to each other (a few weeks). Remember that food guarding is a normal dog behavior and there are some dogs that may never be able to eat together.

If you are worried at any point, pick up the leash and walk the new dog away. It may help to spray the dogs with water if they start to fight. Do not grab either dog, as you may get bitten by mistake.

Avoid playing high arousal games with the dogs. Tug-of-war or a fast game of fetch may cause a fight to break out as they are both energized. Do not expect the dogs to share the same bed. It may be wise to crate your new dog until a relationship is established and you know that she is potty trained. Eventually it would be ideal to have both dogs, with a dog bed each, sleeping in the same room. Separate the dogs when you are not home until they have proven that they can get along.



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## **Dog to Cat**

Be prepared before the dog comes home. Make sure the dog does not have access to the cat's food and water and especially the litter box! When introducing your new dog to your cat, put the cat on a raised surface like a table or dresser. This will help the cat feel less threatened. Bring your new dog into the house on a leash. If they both seem calm, allow them to sniff each other and then reward the dog's good behavior, such as calm approach, with a treat. After a few meetings, if all has gone well, you can drop the end of the leash and let him drag the leash around the house so you can grab it if necessary. It is normal for the cat to hiss and growl at first, especially if she has not lived with a dog before. Cats take time to adjust to changes. Never allow the dog to chase the cat, even in play, as this situation can easily get out of control.

If the initial interaction isn't good then keep a distance between them to allow time for adjustment. Reward the dog with treats for calm behavior. You can try spraying them with water if they start to fight. Make sure the cat has an escape route or can leap to a high place. Do not let dog chase or corner the cat or vice versa. Separate them when you are not there to supervise until you all are comfortable with the situation.

If your cat hides, don't worry. Make sure the cat has a private place not accessible to the dog where she can eat, drink, and use the litter box in peace. Always insure that the cat has access to her litter box, but that the dog does not. Allow the pets to adjust in their own time - be patient and act calm and relaxed. Often they become friends but sometimes they just tolerate each other. Either way you should respect the arrangement.

## Dog to Caged Pet

Generally, keep caged pets out of the reach of your dog in secure habitats in a separate room. Any introductions should be done with the dog on leash and must be monitored carefully. Most small pets get very nervous and frightened because many dogs have a prey drive towards these types of animals. Always be present and keep visits short.

## Dogs and Children

It is very important to consider carefully whether a new dog is good choice when you have young children. Many puppies and dogs think of children as littermates because children have higher pitched voices, get easily excited, run and fling their arms about, and are closer to the dog's size. All of these behaviors signify "Play Time" for a dog or puppy and they become excited and overactive. The puppy/dog interacts in play with the children, just as it would with other dogs/puppies. They nip, jump up, bang into, knock over and wrestle with children or their clothing. Also, young children need to be taught by their parents how to handle dogs with proper gentleness. They usually want to hug and squeeze the dog and are often too rough despite their sweet intentions.



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### ***Supervise all interactions with children and animals!***

If the dog is getting too excited, teach the children to stand still "like a tree;" fold arms and hide hands, then walk away slowly and calmly. Teach your children how to interact with dogs:

- Allow the dog to approach you, not the other way around.
- Pet the dog under the chin or chest.
- Don't look directly into the dog's eyes.
- NEVER approach or touch a strange dog.
- disturb a dog who is eating, chewing or sleeping.
- Do not allow children to climb on the dog, hug tightly, pull the tail or grab feet.
- Keep your children's faces away from the dog's.

