

***We're getting a new puppy! How can I introduce my older dog safely?***



**Jodi says:** CAREFULLY! It is best to be sure that the first meeting is positive, so that you won't have to undo damage done by a bad experience. (If the older dog has KNOWN ISSUES with meeting other dogs, it is best to consult a trainer first.)

*FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS: Socialize your puppy right from the start. Noted dog trainer Ian Dunbar says, "Meet 100 new people by 12 weeks"! Include meeting other dogs and cats in that goal. When your puppy is grown and needs to be introduced to a puppy, it is much more likely to be a positive, fun experience.*

**TRAINING YOUR OLDER DOG TO: "Meet The New Puppy!"**

1. Before the meeting, **let both dogs smell the other dog's scent** on you and other people. Rub a towel over the puppy and let the older dog sniff the towel and be around it for some time in advance. Also do the same for the puppy so s/he can sniff the scent of the older dog and become familiar.
2. Plan the meeting place to be a **small neutral area, no food around, no toys or bedding** around. Avoid using leashes in case they get tangled and they can't escape each other! This is NOT a time to use treats either, or food issues may erupt!
3. Have **two people present**, one handling the older dog and one handling the puppy.
4. **Hold the puppy** so the older dog knows you are in control, let them sniff and greet with **LOTS of PRAISE and PETTING**. Don't use treats since that may cause food guarding issues.
5. Notice their **reactions**. A shy puppy could be traumatized by a big bark from the older dog, while another puppy might take it in stride. A more outgoing puppy might see it as an invitation to play rough.
6. **Supervise them** while they sniff around each other and the area. Be sensitive to the puppy's fear. (He may pee on you and/or the floor.) Be sensitive to the older dog's patience level. Remove the puppy **before** the older dog feels the need to "correct" him by growling, barking, or biting.
7. Pup shouldn't be overly pesky and the older dog shouldn't be overly bossy and rough. The handlers are in control. **Observe the reactions** of both and move them apart if it gets out of hand.
8. **End the meeting on a positive note**. If the puppy became frightened, pet and calm him and then re-approach the older dog's rear and let the pup sniff while you pet and praise the pup. Then leave the meeting. If you take a scared puppy out of the situation right away, he may hold onto a fear of older dogs. Calm him, give him another sniff, then end the meeting positively.
9. Remember to supervise them when they meet again, especially with food, toys, and bedding around. **Know that they are ok together by closely observing** until you are sure.
10. If you are NOT sure you can keep the puppy and older dog safe and happy together, **consult a trainer at Paws Inn for more help**.