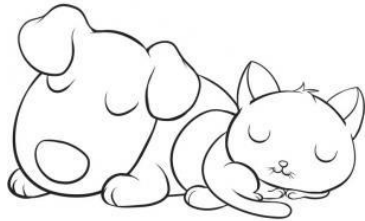


Dog to Cat Introductions



- 1. Give your cat a safe place:** Be sure to give your cat various areas of the house to escape to if they feel threatened by the new dog, such as a new climbing perch or access to a safe room that your new dog cannot get to. Also, consider the location of the litter box and food dishes; initially your cat may feel uncomfortable trying to get to familiar areas with a new dog in the house.
- 2. Practice obedience:** Before introducing your new dog to your cat, work on some common cues meant to teach him/her impulse control, such as “sit-, focus-, and leave-it.” Training exercises will help you form a bond with your newly adopted dog as well as give you the ability to redirect your dog’s focus if they become too excited when seeing the cat. Please contact your adoption counselor if you have any questions about teaching these cues!
- 3. Control their initial meetings:** After your new dog has an understanding of some basic cues, introduce the two by allowing them to see each other through some type of fencing. We recommend using a baby gate. It’s recommended that you keep your dog on a leash as a precaution. If your dog decides it’s time to chase your cat, you will be able to control him/her. Have someone on either side of the gate redirecting the attention of each animal and taking the focus off of each other. Watch for loose, wiggly body language in your new dog. If your dog’s body seems stiff and you are unable to break their attention from the cat, stop the exercise and go back to working on training cues and try again at a different time.
- 4. Face-to-face:** After they seem comfortable with each other on opposite sides of a baby gate, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction. Put a leash on your dog and have your dog sit or lay down using high-value treats, such as cheese, chicken, or hot dogs. Have another family member or friend enter the room and quietly sit down with your cat on the opposite side of the room. Keep in mind to look for loose body language from your new dog. Be wary if your dog becomes stiff or tense. If so, redirect your dog’s attention and reward them for responding.
- 5. Let your cat go:** If both pets seem comfortable, allow your cat freedom to explore. Keep your new dog on leash during this time and go through your obedience cues with them while the cat explores the room.
- 6. Positive reinforcement:** Each time your dog ignores the cat, reward them over and over until they learn that they want to ignore the cat in exchange for a reward. Because dogs learn by association, you want your new dog to have positive thoughts about being around the cat in a calm and well-behaved manner.
- 7. Supervise:** Initially, you may want to keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house. Be sure that your cat has an escape route and a place to hide. Keep your dog and cat separated when you are not home until you are comfortable with everyone’s safety.

