



# Bringing Home a Baby

## Getting Your Dog Ready for the New Baby:

It is very important to prepare your dog for the day you bring home your new baby. You must start early to build the new environment your dog will understand...

Dogs can feel shunned and become confused and stressed when parents suddenly change their attention from them to the new baby. Your dog does not easily understand that the baby is now elevated above him. In trying to regain his perceived position in the pack, your dog will try to nudge his way back. He might try to bark when your baby cries, jump up, or steal your baby's toys.

## Tips to prepare your house and dog for the new baby:

- **What are your new "Baby Rules"?** You will have new rules for your home and family when your new baby arrives. Make sure you begin to implement them at least 3 months before your baby arrives. If you want your dog out of the baby's room, put up a baby gate and correct him if he tries to get in. Start to break up your regular schedule so that your "soon to be" erratic lifestyle will become the norm in your dog's eyes.
- **Prepare your dog for the baby.** Get a baby doll and dress it up with the clothes your new baby will wear. Carry the doll around and treat it just as you would your new baby. Apply baby lotion to the doll and even wash it. When your baby arrives, bring a newborn blanket home from the hospital and wrap the doll in it so the doll smells just like your new baby.
- **Properly introduce your baby and dog.** Your dog will need to "touch scent" your newborn to understand what it is. Have one person have the dog on a leash and have another person hold the baby at chest level. Allow the dog to smell the baby's bottom or feet. Do not allow the dog to get excited.
- **Properly socialize your dog and baby.** The more your dog and baby are together, the more they will understand the other's actions and intentions. Never leave your dog and baby alone.
  - Teach your dog the difference between his toys and your baby's toys.
  - If your dog puts one of your baby's toys in his mouth, correct him and give him one of his toys. Praise him when he does it.
  - Do not allow your baby to approach your dog when he is eating or play with the food in his food bowl.
  - Do not allow your baby to tease the dog, grab his ears, pull his tail, or poke him.
  - NEVER allow your baby to put his face near your dog's face.
  - Correct and remove your dog if he begins to growl or show signs of agitation with your baby.