

# CHILDREN AND CATS



## 5 Things to Know for Successful Interactions Between Children & Cats



### 1. Create a cat-friendly environment

Provide your cat with plenty of safe spots to escape the children when they need a break. Cat trees and shelves are a great option. Keep your cat's litterbox, food, and sleeping area in separate "kid-free" zones.

### 2. Supervise all interactions between your children and cat

Even the most tolerant animal may react defensively to their tail being tugged or grabbed by children. They may perceive this as a sudden attack or even unexpected pain. Always watch children and encourage gentle interactions.

### 3. Teach children how to pet and interact with a cat

Show them how to pet and handle the cat gently. If the cat is squirming while being held, explain to the children that the cat needs some space. Know your cat's limitations and body language so you can teach this to your children.

### 4. Encourage feelings of compassion and empathy

Cats experience emotions such as pain, fear, frustration, and love just like us. Some things may be fun for the children but stressful for the cat, such as dressing them up or carrying them when they want to be left alone. If the cat begins to associate the children with feelings of stress, they may start to avoid the children.

### 5. Know that as the parent, you will ultimately be responsible for the care of the cat

It is okay to give children age-appropriate duties when caring for their new pet, but always double-check what they are doing to ensure the cat is receiving the care they need. Ultimately, your children may not be able to recognize if the cat has a health problem or if they are feeding them the right food.



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