

Berks County Dog Training Club

A new baby and your dog

The reaction from your dog could be devotion, sibling rivalry or even extreme jealousy. Some of the reaction can be influenced by your actions. A few rules of the game and a few suggestions:

1. Any changes in the dogs routine like sleeping place - do ahead of time. Not days - more like a month or more! If he sleeps on your bed you may want to stop that. If you have to move his bed to fit the baby's bed in your room? Do it way ahead of time. You don't want him blaming the baby for a change in his perceived status.
2. Set up new furniture in advance.
3. Does your dog have any bad habits that you will want to "fix" before baby's arrival? Excessive barking or jumping up?
4. Take an obedience training class with your dog. Practice some of your heeling while pushing an empty stroller. Practice heeling while carrying a bundle of blankets. Practice wait with recall at steps. Dog waits, you do the flight of steps, you call the dog. Practice sit stay and down stay while you sit in a rocking chair, holding a bundle of blankets.
5. When baby is born, send a worn t-shirt or receiving blanket home and put it in baby's bed, making the scent familiar before baby comes home.
6. Baby's arrival: With dog on leash let him sniff baby toes as long as you are not seeing any warning signs of danger. make sure the dog gets some attention just like you would an older sibling. Praise and happy words associating baby and dog. Baby's safety first, dogs feeling of inclusion second. Never leave baby alone in a room with dog. especially if the baby is on the floor!
7. First time baby cries your reaction will influence the dogs response. For the dogs sake, try to stay calm and take care of business with out showing panic. Dog is trying to figure this all out. Help him find his place.