



Making Furry Friends Guidelines for Kids

Here's how to say "hello!" to a dog or a cat.

ALWAYS:

- Ask an adult that knows the animal if you can say hello. Not all dogs and cats are comfortable around children and strangers.
- Animals use their noses like you use your eyes. So before you pet them, you first need to let them smell you.
- Come up to the animal slowly.
- If the animal is small, you can bend or squat down so you don't look big and scary.
- Before you pet the animal, make a fist and let him smell the back of your hand. Don't ever put your hand behind a pet's head until you've let him smell your hand first.
- Be gentle. Pet the animal the way fur grows – stroke from head to tail.
- Even if you are very excited, always talk to a pet in a quiet, calm voice.

NEVER:

- Pull ears or tail
- Step on paws
- Hit or Kick
- Jump on the animal
- Play tug-of-war
- Toss or swing toys to dogs or cats when they aren't look at you
- Touch dogs or cats while they are eating or have a toy in their mouth
- Share snacks because human food, especially chocolate, can make an animal very sick
- Hug a strange animal
- Pick up a strange animal

What if the dog or cat is sleeping?

- If the animal is sleeping, let him sleep. Pets get tired and need lots of rest – and not just at night. They need to take naps during the day too.

Can dogs do tricks?

- Dogs can learn to do lots of things, like “sit”, “stay”, “come” and “drop it”, but they learn differently than you do. Sometimes it takes a long time to get them to understand what you want them to do, so you have to be very patient.
- Have an adult show you how to teach a dog to sit, stay, come or play ball:
 - Use only one word. Because dogs read body-language better than they understand words, sometimes you need to use a special hand motion to go with the word.
 - Say the word and make the hand motion only one time
 - When the dog does what you ask, be sure to thank the dog by saying “good dog” in a happy voice.
 - Never reach into a dog’s mouth to take away a toy. Always ask the dog to “drop it” and wait for the dog to take a step back.



REMEMBER: Making friends with a pet is different than making friends with a person. Not everyone knows how, so it's important to tell and show others the right way before they say hello or play with your pet.

