



## Preparing For A New Baby- Cats

*Expecting the arrival of a baby is an extremely exciting time for everyone involved, and we're here to help you prepare your cat(s) so the transition is as smooth and positive as possible. This is a major life change for the home, especially if this is your feline friend's first, and cats typically love daily routines and familiar people (which will all change once baby comes), so we want to get them adjusted as stress-free as possible. Follow these tips to start preparing your resident cat(s) for your baby now, so the only change once the baby comes is the baby themselves!*

1. **Introduce as many smells that will become norms in the home as soon as possible** by using some baby powders, baby soaps and lotions on yourself regularly so that these become familiar and not associated with the brand new addition. This will help your cat(s) slowly adjust and feel less of a change at the time the baby comes home. These small changes will make your household smell different and your cat will notice it, so introducing these smells before the baby arrives helps create less of a major change once baby is here.
2. **Ideally, set up the nursery in a space you cat doesn't spend a ton of time** (for example, if they have a favorite window or favorite room, try to leave them this space). This will allow them to go to their comfortable safe zone if they are feeling stressed out when the baby arrives.
3. **Once your nursery is set up, encourage your cat to sniff and explore the room.** This will allow them to feel safe and secure around this space once the family begins spending more time there. Furniture moving around, new furniture, the smell of new paint, and all new products can be scary or just confusing for your cat so allowing them to adjust to the space will help the transition and ease their stress long-term.
4. **Set up other spots in your home to make it how it will be when the baby arrives**, such as strollers, baby swings, etc, so the home isn't suddenly filled with all brand new things as soon as the baby arrives.
5. **Establish changes to the daily routine, ideally at least a month in advance:** feeding, playtime, petting time- and keep these consistent once the baby comes home. It is important that your cat's needs for play and attention are not ignored with the arrival of the baby. You should also get them used to other routines, such as always closing the nursery door at night, or throughout the day when the baby would be sleeping, so that your cat gets used to things sometimes being off-limits.
6. **Crying is often the scariest part of the new baby experience for a cat- try to get them desensitized** to this by playing baby crying noises so the sound becomes less unfamiliar.



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**Once the baby is home, please be patient with your feline friend.** Cats need time to adapt to change and if your cat's behavior is a little bit "off" at first, remember that no matter how much you can help to prepare them, this is a major life change for everyone in the family and eventually everyone, including your cat(s) will settle in. Allow your cat to set the pace of introduction- if they want to hide or avoid the baby, do not try to pick them up to bring them over to the baby, or bring the baby over to their space. Let them set the boundaries. The more in control the cat feels, the less stressed they will end up being. If they are showing signs of stress (hiding, less appetite, hissing, or not acting normal) make sure they have enough safe spaces and spots to hide/perch.

**If your cat is ready to be near the baby, keep interactions brief and positive.** Give them something they love like grooming, treats, special food, or playtime, when the baby is nearby, and end the interaction before the cat starts showing signs of stress. We want to create positive associations with your baby- when your baby is nearby, your cat gets exciting and great things!

**As your baby grows, your cat may get scared again.** Toddlers crawling can be scary for cats because of their unpredictable movements. Follow the above steps again to let them adjust during new life stages.