

Save A *Purrfect* Cat Rescue

adopt for life

Introducing Children

Children who are too young or too immature to treat a cat properly can pose a threat to the kitten's or cat's sense of confidence and safety. Children must be mature enough to understand that kittens and cats do not like to be disturbed when they are eating or sleeping, that there is a right way to hold a cat, that cats are not toys to be lugged around the house, and that a litter box is not a sandbox. That is why parents with toddlers should wait until their children are roughly four years old before adding a cat or kitten to the household.

It is best for the parents to bring their children with them when looking for a kitten or cat. It is recommended that the kitten or cat have been raised with children and that you ask how the cat behaves with children.

Children do not always understand that what is fun for them may be painful for the cat. Explain that they must be careful to watch where they walk and run when the cat is around. Explain, too, that cats often can be frightened by loud, unfamiliar sounds. Ask your child(ren) to speak and play quietly until the cat gets used to them. Caution them not to pick the cat up until you feel your new pet is comfortable enough in its new surroundings not to be traumatized by an impromptu ride. Teach children the proper way to hold a cat: one hand under the cat's rib cage just behind the front legs, the other hand under the cat's bottom, with the cat's face pointing away from theirs. Have them practice this while sitting down in case they drop the cat or the cat jumps from their arms. Reinforce your good advice with good examples. If you discipline a cat by striking it, your children will too.



Cats can inspire a sense of responsibility in children, but children never should be forced to take care of animals. And even when a child is a cooperative caregiver, parents should keep an unobtrusive eye on the cat's feeding schedule, litter pan, and general condition. Parents should remember also that when they adopt kittens for their youngsters, they adopt the kittens for themselves. Inevitably, even the most cat-responsible teenagers grow up and leave home, and they do not always take their cats with them, especially when they go off to college.