

Your Greyhound and Children

Most Greyhounds have never been around children and therefore have no reason to dislike them. The real question is: “Does your child know how to behave with animals?”

Greyhounds by virtue of being “track” dogs generally have not been around children. Therefore they have no reason to dislike children, and in fact, Greyhounds really seem to enjoy being around children. However, there are certain guidelines that we ask that you follow so that the adjustment period for you, your children, and your Greyhound goes as smoothly as possible. This adjustment period can last anywhere from 3 to 6 months, depending on the individual Greyhound and the dedication and patience of the adoptive family.

The following are some simple rules to ensure a happy relationship:

- **LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE** – Do not jump on or even pet a sleeping Greyhound. Some Greyhounds sleep with their eyes open. When a sleeping dog is startled he may growl or come up with teeth before he is fully awake and realizes that the culprit is his best friend. If you must wake your sleeping Greyhound, call his name and have him walk to you. Teach young children to clap their hands and call the dog’s name, being sure to illicit a response from the dog before approaching.
- **Privacy and quiet** – All dogs are entitled to privacy and quiet when they eat and sleep. Children must be instructed to not bother the dog during his “quiet” times. This has to be consistently enforced.
- **Food** – Do not let your child take away the dog’s food or interfere with his mealtime in any way. For the first few days, it is best to feed your Greyhound in his crate to avoid a problem.
- **Hanging On** – Do not hang on the dog’s neck or climb onto his back. Greyhounds can be injured or feel threatened.
- **Door Bolting** – Make sure you have a firm hold on your Greyhound by the collar before any door is opened (house and/or car).
- **Open Doors and Gates** – Be extremely cautious about leaving doors and gates open (car doors too). Greyhounds move so quickly that they will be out the door and down the street in the blink of an eye. Teach your children and their friends about the importance of keeping doors and gates closed at all times.
- **Kindness** – A child old enough to have a dog is old enough to treat him with kindness.
- **Crate** – Do not let your children crawl into the Greyhound’s crate (or bed). Privacy is important. Initially, we recommend that you utilize the crate when your children are actively playing. It is also a good idea to use the crate when children have their friends over to play. This way your new Greyhound has a chance to experience and get used to children while in the safety and security of his crate. The use of a crate is highly recommended when you have children. You will find that the crate is an invaluable tool to keep the dog(s) and children separated when you cannot be there to supervise their interaction. Just as you would not leave a toddler or infant alone unsupervised, **children of any age and dogs should never be left unsupervised.**
- Dogs should not be permitted on the furniture and people should not be allowed on the dog’s bed.
- Children should not be allowed to sit on the floor with the Greyhound. Especially with young children, the Greyhound’s “quiet time” must be respected. Children should learn to call the dog to give gentle pets and attention, however, when the dog walks away, he has had enough and should be allowed its private space.
- It is recommended that dogs that live with children be taken to obedience school by an adult to learn basic obedience and to aid in the establishment of who is in charge. Most basic obedience classes are

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held in the evening, one class a week for 6 to 8 weeks. You can call your local pet store about classes. Many veterinarians and boarding kennels may also be able to recommend a class.

- Parents who feel their children are too young to be taught how to treat an animal properly should wait until the children are older before they bring a pet into their home.

DO NOT LET YOUR CHILDREN CRAWL UP TO, RUN UP TO, JUMP-ON, OR KISS/HUG A DOG, ESPECIALLY IF HE IS LYING DOWN OR SLEEPING.

- Greyhounds do NOT understand the meaning of a child or children rushing, crawling, running up to him or trying to kiss him or hug him (even if he is awake!). A dog may choose to get up and walk away, do nothing, growl or he may even snap or bite. Greyhounds sometimes sleep with their eyes open, so it is very difficult to tell if one is asleep or awake.

The above suggestions apply to all dog/people relationships, regardless of age.