



## Baby on the Way? Family Paws Top Ten Tips

- 1. Practice basic manners and tricks** so that your dog has plenty of cues he knows well. Examples: sit, touch, place, out, down, leave it, settle, target. Once your dog is confident with these cues, practice them while holding an unusual or heavy object (a “baby”) while you sit, rock, pass the “baby”, etc. Your Family Paws Parent Educator can help you with this!
- 2. Replace unwanted attention seeking behaviors with desired behaviors.** Example: sit to be petted instead of pawing you on the couch.
- 3. Practice short periods of separation with “success stations” while you are home!** Crates, gates, indoor tethers, or a doggie room are all great success station options.
- 4. Know your dog’s sensitivities.** Does your dog startle easily? Chase fast moving things? Act fearful or anxious around new items? Consider how your dog responds to a variety of stimuli. This will help you anticipate how your dog might respond to novel situations with your baby.
- 5. Begin a “baby flexible schedule” vs. a rigid schedule.** For example, if your dog always eats at 6am, you may want to vary this time so that your dog gets used to changes and won’t wake you up early for breakfast.
- 6. Allow your dog to become familiar with the baby equipment.** Gradually put things out and allow your dog to sniff and see the new items. Over time turn them on and allow the sounds and motion to play. Reinforce your dog for checking in with you and/or walking away.
- 7. Introduce the stroller and practice walking politely beside it.** Adding about 10lbs to an empty stroller helps give this exercise a more realistic feel.
- 8. Play novel sounds.** Using novel sounds (cat meowing, duck quacking, etc) can help you prepare with your dog for your unique newborn cry. Observe your dog as you play these novel sounds. What body language does she offer? Dogs can display many responses to novel sounds. Will she follow cues? Take treats? What would you like her to do when she hears this sound? Practicing this ahead of time can really help.
- 9. Final Pet Preparation** As you prepare for baby’s arrival, be sure to familiarize your dog with the person that may care for them while you are away. In addition, complete your dog’s yearly vet check-up and vaccinations (if need be) and be sure to stock up on all necessary medications and supplies (don’t forget those puzzle toys!).
- 10. Have fun and enjoy your family!**