



Encouraging Puppies and Kittens to Be More Outgoing

Some kittens and puppies are a little shy and naturally a bit more afraid of strangers, especially some children and men. Behaviorists and veterinarians now understand that this fear is the primary reason pets may bite. Fortunately, young puppies and kittens can be “conditioned” to accept positive contact with strangers.

Ideally, your puppy or kitten should have a positive introduction to many people during the first few months in your home. The most effective technique for persuading shy animals to trust new people is to have the stranger provide the shy pet with special treats. These special treats should be small, delicious treats that only come from meeting new people. Examples of these special rewards may be small pieces of freeze-dried liver, semi-moist treats, sausage, cheese or anything that agrees with the shy pet and convinces them that strangers are truly wonderful people. Preferably the stranger should be able to hold and generally touch the pet all over while doing the hand feeding. Your puppy or kitten should meet up to 2-3 NEW people daily (especially children and men) during the first 30 days in your home.

Socialization is best done from 8-16 weeks of age, but pets of any age can eventually be reconditioned to accept strangers. Pets that are comfortable around all sorts of people are at a lower risk of having a bad experience later on in life.