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Introducing a New Dog To Children

1. The child should be standing still or sitting when the dog is first introduced.
2. With dog on leash, let the dog approach the child instead of the child approaching the dog.
3. Have the child toss small treats on the ground as the dog approaches.
4. Tell the child to not look directly into the dog's eyes or reach toward, lean over, or hug the dog.
5. When the dog looks comfortable picking up the treats from the ground at the child's feet, have the child hold her hand at her side with a treat in her fist. She should not move her hand toward the dog.
6. When the dog sniffs her hand, she can slowly open her fist and allow the dog to take the treat from her open palm. Repeat this over and over.
7. When the dog is comfortable taking the treat from the child, she can gently scratch him under the chin as he does so (never reach over his head).
8. The child can then ask the dog to "sit" for a treat reward.
9. Gradually introduce more interaction (petting and stroking) if dog is doing well.
10. If the dog is fearful, DO NOT tighten up on the leash or require him to sit-stay. This may increase his fear because he cannot back away. Do not force scary interactions on the dog.
11. If the dog is not fearful but is boisterous and jumping up instead, require him to sit for a treat (a gentle leader head halter can help with boisterous dogs).
12. DO NOT leave the dog and child unsupervised!
13. DO NOT use physical punishment at any time. If the dog is jumping, have the child walk away and only return when he is sitting calmly.
14. Teach your child appropriate behavior around dogs.