

Children and Greyhounds

Based on years of experience, we have found that children under the age of seven years may be too young to be around greyhounds. Therefore, we do not generally adopt to families with children of this age.

It is important for parents to supervise small children any time they are with dogs of any type, and this holds true for families with children and greyhounds. Children should be taught from an early age to be kind to all animals and that they are not play toys. Even the gentle greyhound has its limit when it comes to children who might fall on it, pull on its tail or ears, or scream loudly around it. Here are some guidelines for insuring that your greyhound and your children have a happy and harmonious relationship.

Some Guidelines for Parents

Let Sleeping Dogs Lie:

Teach your children not to pet a sleeping greyhound. Wait until the dog is fully awake and call him to you. Some greyhounds actually sleep with their eyes open. It is important to remember that when any sleeping dog is startled, even if unintentionally, he may growl or snap out of fear.

Feeding Time:

Teach your children not to interfere with the greyhound while he is eating. If you have very young children, it is recommended that you feed the greyhound in an area separate from your children.

Do Not Startle a Dog Who is Lying Down:

Greyhounds have not been raised with children and do not understand a child crawling on, running up to, trying to hug or kiss it when it is lying down (even if not asleep). Wait until your greyhound gets up and call

him to you for a pet. A dog that is startled may get up and walk away, go to another room, growl, or snap at a child that has startled them. All of these behaviors are a warning that the greyhound does not like what is happening and telling the children to knock it off in the only way they know how. Greyhounds are gentle and normally very tolerant, but they do have their limits. Dogs seldom just bite someone—they usually have been giving warning signs for days or weeks before they finally resort to a snap or bite. Greyhounds are very docile by nature. For them to resort to a bite, they are under a lot of stress, the family members in their homes have ignored warnings from the greyhound (walking away, growling, etc.) and eventually the greyhound will fear for his own safety.

Greyhounds Need Time to Themselves:

All dogs are entitled to privacy and quiet when they sleep or eat. Greyhounds are naturally low key, quiet dogs that need a “time out”. Teach your children to not bother the greyhound during his quiet time (just as the children enjoy a quiet time to take a nap, so does the greyhound.) A room or area of the house should be set aside where the greyhound can go when he wants some quiet time.

Crates and Baby Gates:

If you use a crate, teach your children that this is their greyhound’s special place and not their playhouse. Do not let your children crawl into the crate. The use of a crate to confine your greyhound can be very helpful when you cannot directly supervise young children. Putting your greyhound in a separate room behind a baby gate is also a helpful way to segregate the children from the greyhound when you cannot supervise.

Kindness:

Teach your children to treat all animals with kindness. They should NEVER be allowed to fall on, scream at, pull a dog’s ears or tail, pull it around, or otherwise taunt the dog in any way. Teach your children to gently pet the greyhound.

Furniture:

It is recommended that you not allow your greyhound on the furniture or bed with children. A child can inadvertently startle the greyhound which could cause problems as noted above.

Bolting:

Teach your children never to leave a door open, even slightly. Greyhounds are naturally so fast that they can bolt out the door through a small opening very quickly. Also warn your children about the dangers of leaving gates open. It is a good idea to hold your greyhound's collar any time a door is opened to let someone in or out of the house. We also recommend that you teach and reinforce the "wait" command. Any time you are allowing your greyhound out of the door, hold them and say "wait". Go ahead of your greyhound out the door and hold his leash. Always teach them to wait until they are invited out by you. This will be extremely helpful in teaching your dog not to bolt.

If you use common sense and teach your children to be gentle around your greyhound, you will have a wonderful companion for your family for years to come.