



Socialization Tips for Your New Kitten

Socialization is important: It is the process of developing trust in your cat and acclimating her to people and other animals in the home environment. Socializing kittens to live in your home at the onset - what they hear, see and experience - can help them grow up to be sociable, curious and happy companions.

The first two to seven weeks of a kitten's life is the most important to the success of social development. This period is when they are taking in knowledge at a rapid pace based on what they are experiencing in their environment.

Good socialization includes:

- Meeting new people including men, women, children and babies of all ages and nationalities.
- Meeting people wearing hats, walking with canes or using a walker.
- Meeting other pets of all types, ages, and breeds (ensure they are friendly).
- Getting exposure to loud noises including thunder, vacuum cleaners, and everyday sounds in their environment.

What pet parents can do while their kitten is young:

- Take your kitten to the veterinarian so they can get accustomed to being handled by staff.
- Take your kitten in a carrier on car rides to drive through fast food restaurants and banks.
- Provide lots of play time with interactive toys (no rough play with your hands).
- Brush and groom including trimming their nails.
- Teach them tricks like high five and sitting pretty for treats.
- Handle daily: touch their feet and tail and look in their ears and mouth. This will get them accustomed to being handled and examined.

Preventing anxiety:

Anxiety reinforces several negative behavior issues, including aggression. It is important to remember that socialization, including exposure to novel things and new people, should continue throughout the cat's life. A well socialized cat that is active and curious will have a healthier and happier life.