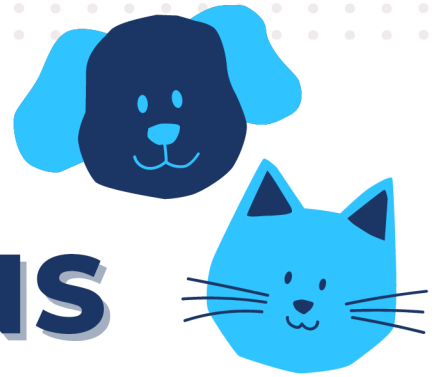
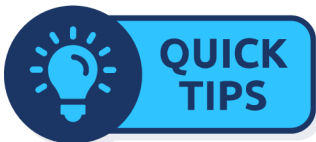


A guide for **DOG-TO-CAT INTRODUCTIONS**



- **Have a “safe room” (or multiple rooms), as well as high places the cat can access, but the dog cannot.** You can utilize baby gates, cat doors, and clear off high surfaces. It is important that the cat can retreat to a safe space and relax away from the dog. The cat should have access to food, water, and a litterbox in this area so that no interactions with the dog are forced.
- **Never force the cat (or dog) into proximity** by holding them, caging them, or otherwise restricting their desire to escape. This is very stressful!
- **Place bedding and other items that have the scent of one pet on them in the other’s space** so that each animal can become used to the scent, without meeting face-to-face.
- **For the first introduction, have the dog on leash in case they start to chase.** If it seems to be going well, drop the leash and allow your dog to drag it on the ground. If the interaction suddenly becomes negative, you can step on the leash to prevent the dog from chasing the cat. Once the interaction seems to be going smoothly, take the leash off and supervise closely.
- **If the dog is behaving in a friendly and/or cautious way, try to not intervene in their interactions, except to praise and reward the dog for its good manners.**
- **Interrupt any intense chasing and try to redirect the dog’s attention to another activity.** This can be very difficult to manage at first, so you may have to manage the dog on-leash around the cat until you have worked out a routine or divided up the house.
- **In the first few weeks, observe the trend:** are things getting better or worse? Monitor interactions until there is a pattern or plateau in their relationship.
- **If the dog is the newcomer, be sure to give plenty of extra attention to the cat so it does not associate this change with reduced attention and affection.** If the newcomer is a cat, it’s also a good idea to make sure the dog associates the new intruder with good things for him. Always aim for positive associations!
- **Dogs should not have access to the cat litterbox.** It is unfair to the cat if it cannot relieve itself in private and the dog may eat cat feces and litter.



The key to a successful introduction is patience—don’t rush the process. While we all want our pets to get along quickly, taking it slow sets the foundation for a lasting, positive relationship. Rushing can lead to serious issues that may be difficult or even impossible to fix.