

# Introducing a Dog and Cat

## Preparations

Before bringing the new pet home, set up a private area (closed room or baby-gated space) with food, water, bed, and litter box for the cat. Make sure the dog has had exercise and/or training so that energy levels are lower during first meetings. Make sure you have high value treats for both animals.

## Exchange Scents

Swap bedding, toys, or gently rub a soft cloth on each pet's cheeks and place it near the other's area. Reward calm curiosity with a "yes" and treats. You can do this several times with breaks until both show relaxed interest.

## Visual Introductions

Once comfortable with each other's scent, allow brief visual contact through a barrier. Your dog should be kept on leash and begin far from the cat, saying "yes" and treating for calm interest. Keep sessions short and positive with treats, play, or meals, and calmly end the session if either shows fear or aggression.

## Supervised Meetings

Once both pets remain relaxed during visual sessions, allow brief calm meetings. Allow the cat to move freely with a high perch available. Keep your dog on leash and start from the other side of the room. Say "yes" and click for calm interest. Gradually move closer when the dog stays calm.

## Increase Freedom

Over several sessions, let dogs have more leashed freedom while supervising, allowing cats to approach or retreat at their own pace. Once both remain calm consistently, you can try short periods off-leash while still monitoring closely. It can be helpful to have your dog lay in their bed with a stuffed kong or similar item to keep them busy.