

Teaching Children to be Kind to Animals

Teaching children to be kind to animals can go a long way toward preventing violence later in life. The American Humane Association suggests several ways to communicate healthy, nurturing attitudes to your children.

Be clear about what you expect.

Children must be taught how to play with animals or they can get hurt. Explain why it's not nice to pull on the dog's ears or drag the cat by the tail. Give your children clear rules on how to treat animals.

Be a good role model.

The way you act toward animals teaches your child. When you scratch the neighbor's cat under the chin, or gently pet a dog, your children will watch and copy your behavior.

Be consistent.

Children thrive on routine. If you tell them not to pull on the dog's ears one day, but don't say anything when they do it the next day, your children will become confused about what's okay.

Be realistic.

Don't get a pet just to help make your child responsible; children learn responsibility from parents who demonstrate how to care about others. The relationship between a child and a pet can teach him or her many other things: ways to communicate without words, how to give and receive unconditional love, and why it's important to respect other living creatures.



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