



## **Most common questions and brief answers.**

Couples often choose to test-run their parenting skills with a dog prior to beginning their human family. Once a new baby is on the way, expecting parents may experience mixed feelings, questions, or concerns about raising dogs and kids together. Dogs & Storks™ exists to support families as they learn how to safely include their dog in the new family dynamics. Below are answers to questions many families have shared.

### **Does my dog know that I am pregnant?**

Pregnancy brings many changes for expecting moms, both physically and emotionally. Changes in one's scent, posture, and moods are normal parts of pregnancy. Dogs are experts in observing and recognizing these subtle changes. Some dogs are more observant than others and might react to these subtle changes an expecting mom is experiencing.

### **What reactions might my dog have to my pregnancy?**

Reactions can vary from increased attention-seeking behaviors to aggression. Because of the postural changes in pregnant women, some dogs may view their person as more vulnerable or in need of protection. Women might not walk as steadily, and that can be scary for some dogs. It is important to keep in mind that changes in posture and overall appearance can trigger different and unusual responses in some dogs.

### **Does carrying a doll really help?**

Carrying a doll or stuffed animal is a great role playing activity to get you ready. Participating in this activity will allow you to become familiar with how your dog behaves when your hands are full and you are engaged with something connected to you. Practice with a baby carrier for the most realistic situation. This activity has many benefits and our program provides information on how to best use this exercise.

### **Does playing baby sounds help?**

This depends on the individual dog. It definitely does help new parents feel prepared and confident in knowing how to handle their dog's reaction. We recommend the Sounds Good Baby CD by dog trainer Terry Ryan of Legacy canine. [www.legacycanine.com](http://www.legacycanine.com) Terry clearly describes the importance of habituation in her instructional CD.



## Will our dog be jealous?

Dogs will seek your attention in the ways that have worked for them prior to the baby's arrival. If that is not received well then the dog will move on to other attention seeking behaviors, activities even if it leads to a negative response from you. Evaluating and decreasing attention seeking behaviors prior to the arrival of a baby helps decrease this from being a problem once baby arrives.

**Hiring a professional dog behavior consultant or trainer can greatly decrease stress, prevent problems, and eliminate unwanted behaviors that may present in times of stress and change.**

### **Five great ways to prepare for life with baby!**

1. Identify and decrease attention-seeking behaviors such as pawing, barking, or jumping.
2. Become familiar with the subtle signals and body language of dogs.
3. Begin a baby-friendly, flexible routine of feeding and activities – and include your dog! Be sure to take these opportunities to practice obedience skills.
4. Role-play with a doll & baby equipment to help gradually expose your dog to these new and exciting items. Reward calm and desired behavior.
5. Identify and begin to use designated "dog zone/s" such as a gated or closed room, outside, a kennel or crate, etc. If you have multiple dogs get them used to being apart from one another, too.

### **Resources**

Dogs & Storks™ Online!

Visit [www.dogsandstorks.com](http://www.dogsandstorks.com) for licensed Dogs & Storks rep near you! & [www.dogsandstorks.blogspot.com](http://www.dogsandstorks.blogspot.com)

Dogs & Storks™ Workshops, Podcasts, and DVDs available

### **Books**

***Parenting with Pets*** by Christine Hamer and Margaret Hevel

***Living with Kids & Dogs... Without Losing Your Mind*** by Colleen Pelar

***Kids & Dogs*** by Ruth Weston & Dr. Catriona Ross

### **Baby Sounds CD**

Terry Ryan's ***Sounds Good Series*** located at [www.legacycanine.com](http://www.legacycanine.com)

### **Dog and kid safety**

[www.doggoneseafe.com](http://www.doggoneseafe.com)

[www.doggonecrazy.ca](http://www.doggonecrazy.ca)

### **Most reliable source on dog bite and fatal dog attack info**

[www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com](http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com)

Book: *The Pit bull placebo* by author Karen Delise