

# PICK OF THE LITTER



## DOG TRAINING

### DOGS & BABIES

- *Does your dog respond reliably to the basic commands sit, down, and stay?*

Begin preparing for your new baby by implementing the “Nothing in Life is Free” program. This program requires your dog to earn everything in his life that he wants or needs. To implement this program, ask for a sit before your dog gets anything in his life that he wants, such as receiving breakfast or dinner, being allowed in or out of the house, having the leash put on or taken off, and most importantly, before your dog gains your attention.

Both sit and down stays can be used in many of the same circumstances, because a stay is simply an extended sit or down. In other words, you could teach your dog to perform a sit stay to greet you, family and friends, and you can use a down stay while you are eating dinner or watching TV.

- *Is your dog allowed free run of the house, including furniture and beds?*

Consider how your life will change after the baby arrives. For large, boisterous dogs, jumping on and off the furniture may prove to be a problem when you are attempting to quietly sit on the couch with your baby. Additionally, if you plan to have your baby sleep with you during the first few months, a dog that sleeps on the bed may pose the same problem. If the dog's privileges will change, start early by working with the dog on these changes before the baby arrives.

- *Is your dog able to occupy itself, whether he is with the family or left in a room alone?*

Remember, even with the best intentions, new babies are time demanding. Your dog will need to understand that there are times when you will not be able to give them your one hundred percent attention. Your dog should be given toys that are less demanding of your active participation. For example, Kong toys stuffed with canned food, dry dog food, cheese and peanut butter are much better than a tennis ball. Also, practice spending time in the nursery while your dog is blocked out of the room with a baby gate and given a great bone to chew on. Additionally, teach your dog to “go lie down” on a bed or blanket on command.

- *Is your dog prepared for the arrival of your new baby?*

Before the baby is born, take your dog on a walk with an empty stroller to see how he behaves. After the baby is born, but before coming home with the baby, have someone bring a blanket home with the baby's scent on it.