



Socializing your Kitten

Socialization is the process of developing trust in your cat and acclimating them to sounds, handling, new people, and other animals in the home environment. Having positive associations as early as possible is the key to success here

Socialization Periods

The first two to seven weeks of a kitten's life is the most important to the success of social development. This period is when they are taking in knowledge at a rapid pace based on what they are experiencing in their environment.

Socialization Opportunities

Some things you should focus on when working to ensure your kitten becomes a well-adjusted, happy, social cat include having positive, low-stress interactions. Doing things like taking high value treats or fun wand toys for new places or people to interact with the kitten are great ways to set everyone up for success. Some key areas to focus:

- Interactions with all types, ages, sizes, and race of new people including men, women, children.
- People wearing hats, big jackets or those in wheelchairs, with canes or any other walking assistance device.
- Other pets and animals. As a note, it is critical these interactions are calm and low stress so make sure the other animal is well socialized and friendly with cats and kittens.
- Noises, such as including thunder, vacuum cleaners, and everyday sounds in their environment.
- Your veterinary office- Taking your kitten to the veterinarian so they can get accustomed to meeting and being handled by staff in a positive, low-stress way will set you up for success in the future.
- Car rides in a carrier, so long as they do not show signs of fear or distress, including vocalizations or inability to settle.

Ensure they Have Positive Interactions During

The following are areas where cats typically struggle and special attention should be paid to making sure all interactions during the following activities are monitored closely. Stop if you see any signs of discomfort or fear, stop and come back again later after your kitten has a chance to take a break.

- Brushing
- Nail trims
- Vaccinations
- Being crated
- New environments.

Keep It Going!

It is important to remember that socialization, including exposure to novel things and new people, should continue throughout the cat's life. A well socialized cat that is active and curious will be healthier, happier, and more flexible as they age.