

# Children and Pets:

## Care and Safety Tips

- ▶ Children should not be left alone or allowed to sleep with an animal.
- ▶ Ensure that you and your child always wash hands with soap and water after handling pets.
- ▶ Teach your child not to pull on the ears and tail of animals, or pinch, squeeze, or make loud noises. He or she should never disturb a dog while it is resting, sleeping, eating, or playing with a favorite toy.
- ▶ Teach your child to never approach strange dogs or animals. He or she should never reach through a fence to pet a dog.
- ▶ Don't allow your pets to lick your child's face or any cuts or scratches.
- ▶ Gradually increase your child's responsibility for pet care, but remember you remain the number-one caregiver.
- ▶ Mistreating an animal — tugging a tail or playing too rough — usually stems from curiosity or exuberance. Be sure to safeguard your animal's welfare and help your child understand the animal's needs.
- ▶ Plan carefully for a new pet so you can commit to caring for it throughout its lifetime. Unfortunately, pets given to shelters are most likely to come from families with kids.
- ▶ Learn all you can about the training, feeding, and care of your pet by reading books or pamphlets from your vet or by watching videos.