

## My Cat Doesn't Like New Kitten

**CatChannel behavior expert Marilyn Krieger, CCBC, tells how to make cat feel like he is special again.**

*By Marilyn Krieger*

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**Q:** We have 5-year-old male cat who is the love of our life. He loves us in his own special ways ... with my daughter he lets her hug him like a baby; with me he sucks on my ear in the morning and purrs happily; and he cuddles with my husband in the morning. We also have an 8-year-old cat who is largely left alone as she tends to be rather grumpy.

We brought a playmate home for our 5-year-old because we are all out during the day and he seems to need the attention. Two weeks ago, we brought a new kitten home. Even though they aren't hissing at each other and they sometimes play with each other, the older cat doesn't seem "happy." He seems very depressed, is not showing his kitten side anymore. He used to be very playful and loved our attention. Now he is ignoring us; we are all feeling bad. What can we do to help him?

**A:** Your 5-year-old cat needs to know that he is special and still the apple of your family's eye. Everyone in your family should schedule daily one-on-one quality time with him. If possible, keep the schedule that you outlined in your question, but also add some additional one-on-one times in the evening or afternoon. Keeping a consistent schedule will also help increase his sense of security.

It is important that the kitten is not in the same room with your older cat when he's getting his special one-on-one time since the kitten will become a distraction and demand attention. While your older cat is having quality time with one family member, the kitten should be somewhere else in the house with another family member, engaged in activities the kitten enjoys.

Clicker training will also help strengthen the bonds between your depressed cat and you and help him feel more secure. Clicker training is also fun and challenging for cats, stimulating them mentally. Clicker train daily, at the same times and keep the sessions short and fun. The kitten will also benefit from clicker training. It will refocus the youngster away from the older cat and you can teach him desirable behaviors and good manners. When clicker training, put the other cat in another room during the sessions, otherwise they will distract each other.

Consider keeping the two cats separate from each other for awhile when you are away for the day. The youngster may be too energetic and demanding for the older cat. Only after the 5-year-old has adjusted to the situation, is interacting well with the youngster and has rediscovered his inner kitten, consider leaving them alone together when you are away for long periods of time.