

## Purr-fect Pals

**Patience and respect go a long way to develop a good relationship between your cat and kids.**

*By Cherie Langlois*

For 10-year-old cats Rambler and Leia, their homelife changed drastically after baby Gracie arrived five years ago, followed by Gracie's sister Samantha, several years later. Not only did the cats receive less attention from busy new parents Mike and Lissa Merit, but as the girls grew, they began bestowing affection on the cats in typical tot-like fashion.

"From early on the girls were interested in the cats and wanted to befriend them, but Rambler and Leia felt differently until about a year ago," says Lissa Merit of Alameda, Calif. "Teaching the girls to act quiet, calm and patient around the cats has been very hard; it's hard for any little kid to be those things!"

In a perfect world, children always would be gentle with their purring pets, and vice versa. In reality, however, children express their love by hugging too tightly, and cats protect themselves by scratching or biting. Given enough time and support, however, kids and cats can become best pals.

"Now Gracie and Rambler are great friends," Merit says. "The girls have learned a lot about how to behave around cats, the cats like the attention from the girls and I feel less guilty!"

**\*\*For the full article, pick up the April 2007 issue of CAT FANCY.\*\***

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