



home of The Cat's Den

**News Release**

**Petiquette**  
***Teach kids the ABCs of animal etiquette***

**Toronto, ON—December 3, 2007—** Whether you're a pet owner or not, teach your kids the ABCs of animal etiquette to help them avoid injury and enjoy their encounters with animals.

**A Learn to recognize animal signals:**

- Friendly animals have relaxed ears and body posture. Cats may purr or nuzzle; dogs may wag their tails.
- Playful dogs may crouch down on their front paws and lift or wag their behind up in the air.
- Agitated animals may stare (with dilated pupils), twitch their tail, growl, bark, snarl, hiss, swat or nip. They are not angry, but are warning you to leave them alone.
- Frightened dogs or cats may have raised or bushed out tails, hair raised along the back, arched back, and may whine, yowl or shake. Remember, you cannot make an animal unafraid, even if you want to.

**B Follow these ground rules:**

- Approach an animal only when an adult (not simply another child or teen) is present and gives you permission.
- Wait for the animal to come to you. Present a steady closed fist for the animal to sniff. Let them show whether they want any further contact.
- When petting a new animal, stroke them gently on the side, avoiding the head, ears, mid-back, and belly as these can be sensitive areas.
- Leave animals alone when they are eating, sleeping, or playing with another animal or a chew toy. Do not approach an animal tied up in a yard, behind a fence, in a parked car, or leashed outside a store.
- Never tease or chase an animal or surprise them from behind.
- If an animal has had enough, let them go. Don't try to hold onto them.
- Keep your face away from the animal's face to avoid risk of scratches or bites.
- Talk gently and calmly; do not shout or scream around animals.
- Never play tug-of-war with an animal.

### **C Practice defensive strategies at home:**

- *Parents should:*
  - *Always* supervise children under 10 with animals. *Never* leave them alone, no matter how 'good' the child or the animal.
  - Teach children the difference between their toys and the animal's toys.
- *Kids should:*
  - Stay calm if approached by a strange dog. Stand still, arms at your side. Do not stare at the animal, just look straight ahead. When it moves away, walk calmly away.
  - If an animal jumps up and knocks you down, curl into a ball, elbows and chin tucked in, with fists over your ears.
  - After the animal leaves, come right home and tell your parents what happened and where.
- *Pet owners should:*
  - Keep your pet's nails trimmed.
  - Keep your pet on your own property.
  - Teach pets to play with toys, not hands or fingers.
  - Give your pet a safe place to retreat from children in your home, such as a pet enclosure from Habitat Haven.

Habitat Haven provides custom-designed pet enclosures that give pets room to roam at home, free from threat of predators, falls, or traffic. Easy-to-assemble, these sturdy modular habitats blend into your backyard, balcony, or indoor space, whether house, condo, apartment, workplace or cottage. They enable you to let your pet enjoy the best of both worlds: the comfort, safety and security of the indoors, and the freedom, fresh air and fun of the outdoors.

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Habitat Haven is home of The Cat's Den, founded in 2003 by president Kris Kischer. It provides pet owners across North America with solutions for a wholesome pet lifestyle: innovative pet enclosure systems and accessories. For product information or to order, call 1-866-484-0644, fax 1-416-466-0087, or visit us online at [www.habitathaven.com](http://www.habitathaven.com).

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