Cat Behaviors

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Socialization & Development

• Sensitive period: age range during development in which an animal is most susceptible to the effects of certain experiences (socialization).
  
  • Dogs: 3-12 weeks of age
  
  • Cats: 2-7 weeks of age
Socialization & Development

• A weaning age of 8 weeks in puppies, along with a relatively long sensitive period at 3-12 weeks of age allows for convenient socialization.

• Comparatively, kittens with a weaning age of 8 weeks but a shorter sensitive period of 2-7 weeks of age lead to the potential for developmental and social/behavioral issues.
Socialization & Development

• Appropriate behavior
  – Exposure to members of same species, humans, other animals, travel, noises during sensitive period
    • Friendly, comfortable interaction between other cats, humans, etc.
Socialization & Development

• Inappropriate behaviors
  – Wool sucking
  – Hyperactivity
  – Fear aggression
  – Dominance aggression
  – Interspecies aggression
  – Ingestive behaviors
Body language

• Facial
  – Ears
  – Eyes
  – Whiskers
• Tail movement
• Overall body posture
• Vocalization
Relaxed: Eyes are open and pupils are smaller. Whiskers are fanned, pointed sideways or forward.

Happy: eyes are alert and blinking, whiskers fanned.

Angry: Dilated eyes, eyelids are squinted. Usually try to “stare you down”. Ears may be erect or pointed toward the object of their aggression. May bare teeth.

Frightened: Look for dilated pupils. Usually try to avoid eye contact. Whiskers are flattened, clumped, pointed down, pressed into the face. May yawn or lick their lips.
Tail Movement

http://www.vetchangesworld.com/reading-animal-body-language

Happy: Erect and pointing upward. Tip of tail may be bent.

Angry: Stiff tail that is twitching back and forth. Hair may be standing on end. Tail may be raised at the base and moving.

Frightened: Closely wrapped or tucked under the body.

Playful: U-shaped tail with a curled tip.
Overall body language

http://www.vetchangesworld.com/reading-animal-body-language

Happy: Head may be up while laying prone and stretched out. Standing/walking relaxed.

Angry: Arched back with raised hair. Very stiff body, not relaxed. Trying to look bigger.

Frightened: Head may be up, but body is curled inward. Trying to be smaller.
Content & Happy Cats
Happy, Mad, Worried??
Angry & Frightened Cats
Happy Halloween!
Burger and Fries
Handling Fearful/Aggressive Cats

- Bare Hands?
- Towel/”Kitty Burrito”
- Cat Bag
- Cat Tongs
- Feral Box/Trap
- Squeeze Cage
- Induction Tank/Anesthesia

*Good luck!*
Handling an aggressive cat

- Video courtesy of the late Dr. Sophia Yin
- The Art and Science of Animal Behavior
Questions?