

By Dr. Laura Mosoriak, DVM (Kingstowne Cat Clinic, Alexandria VA)

I work as a veterinarian at a feline exclusive vet clinic and I also have 2 cats and 2 children. Our children are 2.5yrs and 3 weeks old. We have never had any issues between the cats and our kids. Our cats have never been a threat to our kids even though our toddler chases them and makes lots of loud noises! They have never shown any sign of aggression. If the cats are irritated by anything the kids are doing (being loud, running, crying, etc), they will hide or go to another room until things calm down and they seem to be content with that. They still hang out with us and are as friendly as they were before we had children.

There is absolutely no reason to get rid of your cat(s) when you get pregnant. Have someone else clean the litter box so there is no risk of contracting toxoplasmosis. You are actually more likely to get toxoplasmosis from handling undercooked meat or gardening without gloves than you are from your cat!

Unfortunately, you may not have as much time to devote to your cats once baby arrives, but most cats adjust very well to your new bundle of joy after a few days of bringing baby home. Some things you can do to help decrease the stress of such a big change is to have the nursery and baby things set up in the house weeks before birth. This way, the cat can get used to those things being there and that is one less change to deal with. Cats love routine so try to keep their feeding and litter box schedule the same even after baby arrives. Prior to birth, encourage others with babies to stop by for a visit so your cat can see the baby, hear the sounds it makes and scents it has. If this is not possible, start wearing baby lotion to get your cat used to that scent or buy a recording of a baby crying and play it for a few minutes every so many days to get your cat used to that sound. If you want to keep the cat out of the nursery or crib after your baby comes home, you can put a crib tent on or install an interior screen door. I never found this necessary but some people may. I hope this information helps to keep your beloved cat(s) in your home after you have chosen to start a family.

www.kingstreetcats.org