

Avoiding Fearfulness

By

Tara Schneider VOA, MISAP (Beh)

It is critical that kittens be exposed to a variety of people, places and things when they are quite young (7-8 weeks of age and older) and that these experiences be pleasant or linked to pleasure, such as a treat, a toy or petting. This is very helpful in avoiding fearfulness in adult cats. Varying kittens' toys to include objects like little tinfoil balls, brown paper bags, and cardboard boxes of different sizes are all inexpensive puzzles for kittens. Offering vertical and horizontal places to climb on will "broaden their horizons". Even various sounds like the television, children playing or crying, household noises, such as the vacuum cleaner, and music are important to avoid noise-induced fearfulness. Introduce your kitten to new people – men, woman and children. Car rides in a cat carrier (and definitely not just to a veterinary appointment) will make leaving the house much less stressful. Even combs, brushes and nail trimmers can be scary to an adult cat if they have never seen them before. Hopefully some of these suggestions can prevent your kitten from becoming a "scaredy cat".

