

## Critical Learning Periods of Kittens

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Throughout a kitten's lifetime, there are some critical learning periods that occur where learning and socialization are at their most crucial points of development. Between the ages of 4 and 9 weeks, kittens begin to acquire skills and develop behaviours that ultimately affect the rest of their adulthood. Kittens start playing with each other and their mother by 4 weeks of age, helping to develop and practice hunting skills, in addition to improving eye and paw coordination. Early life experiences during this critical period can also influence the behavioural development of kittens. Adult cats tend to be more fearful of their environment if they are not accustomed to noises as kittens. Exposing a kitten to a variety of stimuli such as a vacuum cleaner or small children in a positive manner can help kittens become less fearful as adults.

