

Hand-reared Kittens

By

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Kittens raised close to their mother and siblings for less than four weeks before being separated, have shown some differences in behaviour when compared to kittens who have been with their mother and siblings for longer. Kittens, hand-reared by humans, have a greater risk of developing behaviour problems. The missed opportunity to observe their mother and siblings in unfamiliar circumstances can result in nervousness, aggression and a reduced ability to cope with strange surroundings or contact with animals and humans outside of their familiar environment. It is the interaction and play that helps teach the kitten how to be social and that unfamiliar humans do not pose a threat. Hand-rearing kittens in the presence of littermates and with an unrelated but social adult cat, can mitigate these concerns. Hand-rearing a single kitten in isolation is not recommended.

