

# Ferrets and Children

Most rescues do not recommend having a ferret with young children (under 10). There are several reasons as noted below. I have adopted to families with children. I just want everyone aware of any potential issues.

First, any animal will bite if something happens that it doesn't like. So, if the ferret is pressed too hard, held too long, not allowed to go where it wants to go, etc., it may bite the child. Children do not always recognize when they are pressing too hard, holding too long or not allowing the ferret to go where it wants to go.

Most ferrets do bite some when they are playing. Children usually can't tell what's a bad bite and a play bite and sometimes the ferret bites hard when playing. I have bite marks on my hands and arms from where the ferrets get playing too rough.

Ferrets get ulcers easily from stress. Stress can be from being handled too much, being handled the wrong way, too much noise, too much activity around it and so on. Ulcers are very hard to treat and most ferrets end up dying from them. If the ferret is around children, especially young ones, noise needs to be kept to a minimum with no screaming and no loud music or TV. The ferret should not be handled much by the children and only with adult supervision. The ferret needs to have at least 16 hours of quiet time where there aren't children playing around it. Two times I have taken in ferrets that have had to be euthanized because they were in such bad condition from being around young children.

Ferrets can catch viruses and bacterial infections from humans, which is deadly to them. Children are bad about taking precautions.

It is very easy for a child to injure a ferret and not mean to. Rescues get a lot of injured ferrets in and nearly all of those injuries were caused by children and usually by accident. Ferrets are so fast and wiry; they get out of hands fast and fall to the floor or run through a door as it is being shut. Another rescue did a ferret education day at a school. The teacher was holding the ferret. It wiggled out of her hands, fell to the floor and died shortly after. If this can happen to an adult teacher, it can happen much more to a child.

Ferrets are very fast and very, very good at escaping. There's just no way a child can move fast enough to keep a ferret from getting through an open doorway.

Children are very bad about closing doors behind them or closing them tightly. A ferret will always investigate a door that has been opened and will escape if it can.

Ferrets can get intestinal blockages very easily from anything small dropped on the floor. Children cannot be trusted to catch when they drop something or the ferret can chew on the children's toys, shoes, etc. An intestinal blockage means death or expensive surgery. I took in a six month old rescue that had chewed doll clothes. He died within a week because he was too weak to have surgery. The surgery would have cost upwards of \$400 or more.

Children tend to respond to peer pressure. While your child may be good around the ferret, the child's friend may not be and can hurt the ferret or pressure your child into doing something that shouldn't be done.

Please consider all these things when making a decision.

[www.KindnessMattersFerretRescue.com](http://www.KindnessMattersFerretRescue.com)

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