

How To Nurture A Happy Ferret

Ferret owners have control over three factors that nurture a happy ferret.

By Mike and Arita Morrett

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Many other ferret personalities are present. Many can be attributed to development from birth. Ferrets develop into loving pets through sound breeding, a good living environment, and human interaction and association. The most important age for developing a ferret's personality is from birth to 6 months.

1) Nutrition: A well-nourished, properly fed ferret is a healthier and happier ferret than one that eats poor quality food. Overall good health plays a big part in the development of personality and behavior in all species. Introducing foods other than kibble – like pieces of chicken, turkey, lamb, pork – at an age under 6 months will imprint these as food and enable the ferret to enjoy a variety of food its entire life.

2) Environment: A safe, clean and appropriately sized living space with sufficient freedom from a cage or playpen containment enhances the health and happiness of the ferret. It is imperative that young kits receive as much interaction with people as possible. A well-socialized ferret is a loving companion.

3) Human Behavior & Association: We believe that a ferret raised in a human-friendly environment comes to associate humans as their favorite toys. Kits raised to know that humans are not and cannot be treated as another ferret are gentler with humans.

Ferrets that never suffer abuse or neglect by humans rarely become biters. An aggressive ferret exhibiting severe biting is a result of many things. Two causes are poor selection of the breeding parents and neurological/medical problems.

Abuse and lack of proper socialization are major causes of aggression. Abused or improperly socialized ferrets distrust any attempts at handling and consider human hands as instruments of abuse. Once a ferret exhibits this behavior, its personality is altered. It takes patience, love and time to rebuild the trust of the ferret and develop a happy, loving personality. In our 14 years of pet store and breeder ferrets, we have not seen an aggressive ferret in our home, which indicates a good living environment and love and affection makes all the difference.

Mike and Arita Morrett are co-owners of Savannah Lakes Ferretry in South Carolina, where they reside with their eight ferrets, and breed pet and show-quality ferrets.