

Words of Wisdom

It is a priceless moment in time - the day your child and pony first meet - and one that should mark the beginning of a very special and treasured journey of partnership and fun for both.

Unfortunately though the reality is often far removed from the ideal and joy can soon become fear, laughter become tears. Buying a pony for your child is a huge step and one that should take a considerable amount of thought, time and patience. As the Mum of three small children myself and being professionally involved with horses and horsemanship now for the last 17 years, I've had a great many first-hand encounters with children and their ponies and horses. I am fortunate to have seen a few instances where child and pony were a perfect match, but for each of these I've seen dozens that were the total opposite. Children with totally inappropriate ponies that were far too much for them to handle let alone ride, children on horses that were simply too big and too advanced for them and



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even children who had been bought young unstarted horses (green) or colts and stallions!

It's fair to say that getting into horses for the first time takes quite a bit of navigating. If you've never been a horse owner before, you'll soon find yourself engulfed in well meaning advice from all and sundry, but sifting through what it really useful and what is just not, can be a very difficult task. And even if you have been a horse owner yourself before, buying a pony for a child is a completely different exercise. Looking at things from a child's perspective and considering all their needs will be very different to that of an adult.

Ponies aren't pets, neither are they toys.

They are large creatures that can be scary and dangerous. But they don't need to be. They can be huge amounts of fun and great companions for your child for many years, if you go about finding the right pony and making sure your child learns good horsemanship skills. I would encourage all parents to take their time finding the right pony. Make sure it is genuinely quiet, very well educated and mature. Before making your final decision, seek professional help and get yourself a copy of Lorraine's book. There's no better place to begin.