
Adoption Tips - Dogs

Be a responsible pet owner. Careful research and planning are essential, since being a responsible pet owner requires more than just providing adequate food, water and shelter. Potential pet owners should agree with these points before bringing a dog home.

Animals are not disposable! Animals are not articles of clothing to be thrown out once they are no longer in style. They are capable of bonding deeply with their families. Adopting a pet means making a life-long commitment, which can easily be 10-15 years for dogs.

Don't banish your dog to the backyard. A dog that is constantly left alone can develop behavior problems. Dogs thrive on several hours of exercise and companionship every day. One adult in the home should be designated as the primary caretaker so that the pet's daily needs, such as food and water, do not become lost in the shuffle of busy schedules.

Protect your pet's health and safety. Owning a dog costs more than the adoption fee. Remember to include basic and emergency veterinary care, toys, supplies, and food. Spaying and neutering is also essential for the animal's long-term health and happiness, while providing the animal with proper identification will ensure his or her safety.

Choose the right pet for your home. Dogs are not right for every household. Problems such as allergies, apartment restrictions, or moving issues should be discovered before adopting a new pet. Large dogs may be too strong or active for small children. Small pets may be too delicate for children.

Obedience train your dog. Basic training helps dog owners communicate better with their pets and strengthens the human-animal bond. Research shows that people who train their dogs are more likely to keep them. Learn what is appropriate behavior and what can be changed with training, if needed.

Family Adoption Tips

The ASPCA reminds you that adding a dog to your family is a big decision and that you should act with your head, as well as your heart. If your family is thinking about getting a pet, consider these important points:

Ask yourself and your children why they want a pet. Discuss their likes and dislikes, so you don't accidentally come home with a pet that frightens them.

Don't forget pets are with you for 10 or 15 years.

If you are getting a pet for your child, it is unrealistic to expect the child to do

all the work. No matter how mature your child is, you will need to provide constant supervision and act as a back up when your child is unable to handle the responsibility.

Make sure your family is ready for the changes an animal will bring into your home. Puppies need a lot of attention and training, can end up chewing household items, and do not remain small for long. Young animals have needle sharp nails and milk teeth that can hurt youngsters by accident.

Learn which type of dog breed would best suit you and your kids. Some breeds are more naturally bossy or high strung than others. Breeds like Labradors or Golden Retrievers are known to be more even tempered and will do well with children. Most toy-sized and touch-and noise-sensitive dogs are not suitable for young children.

Make sure no one in your family has allergies. If you are unsure about your children, have them spend time (several hours minimum) in the home of pet owning friends before bringing home a dog.

Teach your family and kids about the pet before adopting. Educate yourself and your kids through reading books or researching on the internet about pet care. Walking a dog several times a day, cleaning up feces, and feeding and bathing a pet are all part of the ongoing family responsibilities of caring for an animal.

Young puppies and children may not mix well. Very young children may unwittingly mishandle or hurt a puppy that is particularly vulnerable to being pulled at, dropped, or picked up inappropriately.

Make sure the pet suits your home and lifestyle. Dogs require daily exercise and attention, and the size of the dog should be considered, since a large active dog may not be appropriate for a small apartment.

Tips adapted from the ASPCA.