



Signs Your Child Is Ready For A Dog

It seems that as soon as your child is old enough to speak, they'll start asking for a puppy. Although adding a puppy or dog to the family can be very beneficial for growing children, it's important to ensure they are ready for the responsibility of caring for a dog. Parents also need to be prepared to teach both children and dogs how to properly interact to guarantee safety for both of them. The six signs below will help indicate if your child is ready to add a furry member to the family.

Your Child Is Comfortable Around Animals

Often parents feel the best way to overcome their child's fear of dogs is to add one to the family, but that's a common misconception. Children who are afraid of dogs often make mistakes when caring for them or choose to not care for them at all. Build your child's confidence around animals by visiting pet stores and animal shelters or visit a friend or family member who owns a dog. Forcing your child to interact daily with a dog may only increase their natural fear.

Your Child Respects Animals

If your child does not have the self-control to respect an animal's space, it's likely not a good time to add a dog to the family. Kids must understand the proper way to interact with animals, like how and when to pet a dog, for example. Sensing an animal's mood and understanding its boundaries is crucial to ensuring your child and pet live happily and safely together.

Your Child Keeps Up On Their Current Chores

The novelty of walking, feeding and grooming the dog will fade a few weeks after bringing the puppy home, but the work still needs to be done. It's important that your child is regularly helping out with chores before getting a dog so you can be confident they will be ready to help out with pet care.

Everyone In The Family Is Committed To Getting A Dog

Taking care of an animal is a team effort, especially when also juggling busy work and school schedules. Make sure every family member is on board to help care for the dog, and that the desire to have a pet is long-term and not a current fad.

Your Family Has Successfully Tested Out Pet Ownership

There is so much more to owning a dog than just cuddles and playing fetch, so give your child a trial run of dog ownership by dog sitting for a family or friend's pet. If your child is bored of taking the dog out, or refuses to help clean up after the dog, it's most likely not the time to get a pet.

You, As The Parent, Are Ready For The Responsibility

No matter how many promises they make, kids at some point will neglect their pet care responsibilities and the parents will need to step in. Assume that you will be the main caretaker for the dog, and your children will play a supporting role. No matter how ready your children seem to be, if you aren't ready for a dog, it's best to wait.