

# Is Your Family Ready For a Puppy?

The Covid-19 pandemic hovered over the country for many months, forcing lockdowns and causing many people to work from home for the duration. Another outcome? The pandemic puppy boom. To ease feelings of isolation, or because of the convenience of being home during the day, many people sought out puppies. Perhaps you and your family have tossed up the possibility of getting one too, but while puppies sure are adorable, the commitment is not something to take lightly, especially if you have young kids in your family. Before you adopt or buy a puppy, you and your family must consider if you are actually prepared for adding a furry member to the household. Here are 5 questions to ask yourself:

## 1. Are my children comfortable and respectful around dogs?

This is hugely important. Consider your child's interactions with dogs in the past. If your child is scared of dogs, then getting a puppy and hoping they will change their mind is not the best idea. If your child has shown they are comfortable around dogs, perhaps take it a step further and try some "test-runs" by dog-sitting a friend's pet for a couple of days. This dog should be older and calm, but still make sure to keep an eye on your child at all times while they interact with the dog.



Remind your child there are many things that they cannot do with or around a dog: no hitting the dog, throwing toys at the dog, sitting on or hugging the dog, taking food away from the dog, or shouting at the dog. If your children do well with these "test-runs" and if your family decides to get a puppy, make sure your kids know these same rules apply to your puppy.

## 2. Do my children complete their household chores consistently?

Puppies are a lot of work. Someone will need to feed and walk him daily, and periodically bathe him. The puppy will also need to be potty trained, as well as trained behaviorally. This all requires patience and consistency. Is your child ready and able to help out?

To help answer this, ask yourself if your child is on top of their household chores. This is a good indicator of how they handle responsibility and duties they may not consider to be the most fun. Once

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the shine wears off of the new puppy, you want to make sure that your children are still committed to helping take care of him.

### 3. Does my family have extra time?

Though you may still be working from home, the kids are back in school and most likely back in various after-school activities; the extra time you had during the day throughout the pandemic may now be filled. In fact, many people feel more overwhelmed than before. Alternatively, if you and your partner are working in-office, you may feel like you don't have any time to relax after work. If you already feel busy and stressed out, perhaps adding a puppy to the mix is the last thing you need. A puppy should be a welcome addition, not a source of new stress

### 4. Can my family afford puppy expenses?

Having a dog will not be cheap. You will spend money on things such as vaccinations, food and treats, vet check-ups, dog toys, and surgery if you want your puppy spayed or neutered. Additionally, if you plan to get a trainer or have your puppy go to obedience school, this will be extra money. Your family should be financially able to commit to a puppy.

### 5. Are my children and partner all on board?

It is incredibly important that all members of your family want the puppy. If your partner is not completely ready to take on a puppy, or if any of your children are hesitant, it may not be the best idea. Your puppy will likely be around for 8-14 years, depending on the breed--this is a big chunk of time. You will want everyone in the family willing to help take care of the puppy for the long haul.

now  
what?

KEEP CONNECTING.

Dogs can teach your children powerful lessons such as responsibility and patience, as well as providing them with a companion who will always listen and quickly show them what unconditional love looks like. If your family chooses to get a puppy, enjoy the journey!



Originally posted on the Now What? Blog on 11.4.20 The Now What? Blog served for nearly 7 years to

1. Normalize parents seeking support and help as a manner of child abuse prevention
2. Engage community in how they can work to prevent child abuse
3. Work to build resiliency in families through promotion of the 5 protective factors

Maybe you coach a baseball team or you help care for the neighbor kids from time to time. You are investing in the safety and security of the children in our community. Because it truly does take a village to raise our children, we want to offer the tools needed to bring awareness and education to preventing child abuse.

now what? Keep Connecting.

