



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Behavior Modification Handout

Selecting the Right Pet for Your Family

Making the perfect match! Selecting the right pet for your family will take a little research. Deciding on things such as breed type and characteristics, size, age, energy level and exercise needs ahead of time will help you to make a good choice. Considering individual breed temperament is also important and defining exactly what it is you desire in a companion. Are you an active family that loves to hike and camp and want to take your new pet on adventures with you? Or do you find a good action movie adventure enough? Whatever you and your family enjoy doing and why you are about to add a pet to the household should be considered when searching furry faces for a friend.

Getting Started

Having a family meeting or similar get together to make some of the decisions and come to agreements is a great place to start. Getting everyone on the same page will help you to stay focused on your selection goals once you start actively searching for your new pet. Goals should include selecting a breed group that is suitable for your particular family dynamic. To make it easy, think of which of these three categories best describes your family:

1. Very energetic, active and outgoing.
2. Moderately active and outgoing.
3. Not as active and calm or reserved.

Your family type should match the breed group type you choose. Age will also play a big role in activity level and family or personal time consumption. Puppies and kittens need more attention and will take more time to train.

Other areas to consider would be grooming needs and medical expenses. Some breeds need regular grooming to stay healthy and looking their best, while other breeds may have predisposed genetic issues that require more frequent trips to the vet.

Once you have decided on general character specifics now it is time to choose the perfect pet.

Nice to Meet You

Just because you have narrowed it down to a beagle as the best fit for your family does not mean every beagle you meet will be the right one for you. Patience and perseverance will pay off so take your time and make sure you make a love connection before taking the plunge. Everyone in the family should be comfortable interacting with the new pet. Small children should especially be considered when adding a new pet to the household. They need to feel safe and the pet should feel safe also. If Dad is the only one in the family that is jazzed about the new dog then you are setting yourself up for failure.

Make sure to set aside enough time for a proper introduction when looking for a new lifelong companion. This should not be an impulsive decision made on the fly.

Tips and Hints

- Do your research! Don't select a breed because you like the color or just think it is cute.
- Be realistic when setting goals. If your family is not active don't squeeze yourself into that category just so you feel better about looking at that Border collie.
- Be patient; don't rush into something you don't feel sure about. This is a big decision and should be taken seriously.
- Consider your other pets at home. You may need to set up an introduction to determine if they will get along together. No pet, neither the resident pet nor the new pet should be the victim of constant harassment in the home.
- Have a back up plan. If the breed you choose does not seem to be fitting in with your expectations you may find other breeds in that group may be a better fit.
- Don't forget about the mutts and mixes. A Heinz 57 may be the best choice for your family!