



Dog & Puppy Adoption

When you adopt a dog from the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society (BEBHS), you'll find a loyal and devoted best friend for life! In return, your dog will need you to provide training, exercise, medical attention and proper care and protection. Depending on your new pet's age, this could mean devoting significant time, resources and energy to your dog for the next 10-15 years.

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Puppies vs. Adults

Just like human babies, raising a puppy requires a lot of time and effort. Housetraining usually won't happen without its share of accidents, a puppy's urge to chew (everything!) can last for 6-8 months, and puppies don't finish developing their true temperaments until they are around 2 years of age. Your puppy will need constant supervision and excellent training in his/her formative months if he/she is to grow up and meet your expectations as a family dog.

With an adult dog, you are getting a pet that has already passed through the more active puppy stages. An adult will usually have had some introduction to housetraining, and will already have an established "personality" that is easier for you to observe. By spending a little time with a mature dog, you will have a good idea of what he or she is going to be like over the long term.

Canine Considerations

Commit to your dog. Dogs are social creatures and thrive as part of a family unit. Consider adopting a dog as adding a new family member – you will have to consider how to meet your dog's needs throughout future moves, job and schedule changes, lifestyle adjustments and family additions. According to the National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, the most common reasons dogs end up in shelters are issues involving living situations and costs – issues that arise when well-meaning people casually take on dogs without considering the long-term.

Adoption fees are not the bulk of the costs you will incur as a dog owner! The average owner spends \$800 per year on food, grooming, veterinary care, boarding/pet sitters and supplies for a dog. And in the case of an injury or other medical emergency, one trip to the emergency clinic can cost \$1000 alone.

Dogs are time-intensive pets. Unlike some pets who are happy to be alone for the bulk of the day, a dog will require a good amount of interaction with you! Consider time needed for basic care, exercise, social interaction, mental stimulation, and training. How much time do you have available to give to a dog throughout your day? (Exercise/training requirements can vary greatly based on breed/mix, age, activity level and size, but most dogs need at least one lengthy walk per day in addition to at least one short training session.)

Expect a period of adjustment. Any new dog from a shelter will have gone through a number of changes in recent weeks, and it will likely take a period of time for him to completely adjust to your household.

Although accidents and setbacks in the first couple of days can be frustrating, be patient. These problems are usually temporary and will continue to improve with management.

The best way to prevent problems is to manage your dog from the very beginning. Although it can be tempting to give a new pet a lot of freedoms when you bring him home from the shelter, dogs appreciate structure. Your new dog will require at least two weeks of careful and consistent management in order to learn the rules of your household. Remember that dogs do not train themselves! Behavior problems are usually both preventable and manageable if you take early steps to set your dog up for success and maintain training throughout his life.

Adoption Checklist

Please complete the following checklist before adding a dog or puppy to your family:

- Consider all long-term cost and time commitments involved in owning a pet. Remember that your responsibility doesn't end when your enthusiasm wanes.
- Research what size, sex and age is the best fit for your unique situation. Just because you are drawn to a particular breed of dog doesn't mean all dogs of that breed will be a good match for your home.
- Obtain permission from your landlord in writing. If you do not rent, check your homeowners association's policy and your insurance policy.
- Consider how adding a dog to your family will affect your other pets.
- Check your fence to make sure it is secure. BEBHS does not advocate leaving your new dog in the yard unsupervised, but you should fix broken or loose boards just in case.
- Consider how your household rules and responsibilities will change. Will the new dog be allowed on the couch? Where will she sleep at night? Who in your household will be responsible for feeding her?
- Discuss the qualities you are looking for in a pet with a BEBHS adoption counselor. If you are unsure of what dogs will be a good match for your household, our staff can get you started!
- Spend at least one hour with the animal you are interested in adopting.
- Involve all household members (including any dogs already in your household) and make sure that everyone is on board with a pet.

Recommended Reading

How to be the Leader of the Pack – Patricia McConnell

Parenting Your Dog – Trish King