

# Are You Ready for a Dog Worksheet

Nothing adds to a family's joy like a new dog. But are you sure your family is ready for the challenge? Answer the following questions to see if this is the right time.

## Are you ready to housebreak a dog?

Invest in some dog training books or watch some videos. You need to know what you're getting into ahead of time. There are lots of techniques and each dog is different, so you'll have to decide what's best for you. But understand that you'll need to invest a lot of around the clock time and effort into this.

Your Housebreaking Plan:

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## Are you ready to train a dog and what method will you use?

Consider buying a few books or check them out at your local library. Watch some YouTube videos with different training methods. Find the one you think will work best in your situation and then study all you can about that method.

Check out local training classes, so you have a backup plan if your own efforts aren't enough. Classes like this can be very helpful.

Your Training Plan:

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### Does your spouse also want a dog?

This needs to be a family decision. Do not surprise your spouse with a dog without a previous discussion about the requirements.

Notes:

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### Are your children the right age for a dog?

Babies require a lot of attention. A new puppy and a new baby are often too much at once. Toddlers love to chase, grab and squeeze dogs. If you have a toddler be aware that you can't leave them alone together. While small dogs can easily be hurt by small children, a large, rambunctious dog will knock them down. A medium size dog or a dog with a very calm nature is best for children.

How will a dog fit in with your family?

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### Is your current home the proper environment for a dog?

Make sure your condo or apartment allows pets and if so, if there are breed or weight restrictions. Will they charge a pet fee? Do you have neighbors close by that will be annoyed by a barking dog? Do you have a fenced in yard? If not, are you willing to take your dog for walks every day?

Things to do at home before bringing a dog.

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### Do you travel a lot?

Would you take the dog with you or do you have someone reliable to pet sit while you're away? Will they take the dog to their home or come to yours? How much will it cost?

What is your plan to care for your dog while you travel?

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### What veterinarian would you use?

Ask your friends and neighbors about vets they've used. Inquire about services offered, length of time to get an appointment, how well the staff and vet interact with their dog, and the cost of services.

Veterinarian details:

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### How will you dog proof your home?

Puppies will chew on anything and everything. It's best to limit their space to one safe room using baby gates.

Your dog-proofing plan:

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### Do you know plants and foods are dangerous to dogs?

You can find a list of dangerous plants and foods online. Remove those plants from your home or place them where your new dog can't get to them.

**SOME plants that are toxic to dogs (please do your research):**

Azalea  
Aloe  
Amaryllis  
Apple Seeds  
Asparagus fern  
Azaleas  
Bay Laurel

Begonia  
Bird of Paradise  
Caladium  
Cherry leaves  
Daffodil  
Daisy  
Desert Rose  
Dracaena fragrans  
English Ivy  
Hydrangea  
Iris  
Jade Plant  
Juniper  
Lilies  
Locust  
Marijuana (not CBD oil)  
Mistletoe  
Oleander  
Pacific Yew  
Philodendron  
Pothos or Devil's Ivy  
Sago Palm  
Tomato plants  
Wisteria  
Zamioculcas

**SOME foods that are poisonus to dogs (please do your research):**

Alcohol  
Apple seeds (small amounts of seeds are okay)  
Avocado  
Caffeine  
Chocolate  
Coconut or coconut oil  
Cooked bones -These can splinter and cause your dog to choke.  
Garlic  
Grapes  
Macadamia Nuts  
Milk  
Onions  
Raisins  
Salty or fatty foods – These are not toxic but too much is not good for your dog.  
Sugar – Also, not toxic but can add to dental and weight problems for your dog.  
Tomato plants (tomatoes are okay, in small amounts)

Xylitol – This is a sugar substitute found in many diet foods, gum, and even toothpaste. It can be fatal for dogs.

What plants do you need to remove from your home?

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### Where will you bathe your dog?

You'll need a bathtub or a large, plastic tub for outside. You may simply want to take your dog to the groomer, but you should be prepared for emergency baths too.

Your bathing plan:

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### What is your grooming plan?

Will you groom your dog yourself or take to a groomer? If so, which groomer and how much will it cost? Hypo-allergenic dogs who don't shed will need more grooming and hair cuts than dogs who do. Inquire at a groomer or with friends about grooming needs and costs.

Your grooming plan:

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## What Size Dog Do You Want?

A lot of people have strong preferences about the size of their dog. Is it really the best for your current situation or just the type of dog you had in your childhood that you fondly remember?

If you live in a small apartment but want a large dog, be aware that you'll have to take your dogs on long walks each day to be sure he's getting enough exercise. A large, bored dog with lots of energy – trapped in a small apartment -- is a recipe for disaster. You'll need room for a large crate and a place to store large bags of dog food.

A small dog may seem like an adorable choice, but if you have small children you need to be cautious. Toddlers will want to hug and squeeze the dog like they do their stuffed animals. This can cause serious injury to a small dog.

What size dog do you want:

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## Do you have the finances to care for your dog?

You need to consider:

- Cost to purchase or adopt dog
- Crate
- Gates
- Spay/Neuter fees

Ongoing costs:

- Additional rent/deposit your landlord will charge for a pet
- Food
- Shots
- Grooming
- Pet sitters or boarding cost when you're on vacation
- Supplies such as leash, collar, bedding, toys, etc.

Potential Health problems

Don't assume you know the costs. Do some checking in advance.

Your financial plan:

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### Will you Buy Health Insurance for Your Dog?

You can get brochures on different plans at your vet's office or online. Be sure and read all the details. What is the deductible? What problems and illnesses are covered? Which are not covered? What percentage of costs are paid? Are only certain vets in the plan?

Health Insurance Info:

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## What major life changes do you anticipate?

A dog is a long term commitment. Though you don't have a crystal ball, you at least need to consider any big changes that could occur in the next few years.

Are you hoping to have a baby? Do you plan to move to a new city? Are you buying a dog for a child who will be leaving for college in a couple of years? All of these changes should be considered before you make a commitment. If you move from a big house to a small apartment there can be problems. Taking care of a new baby doesn't leave time for a lot else. This doesn't mean you shouldn't get a dog, but you do need to think your decision through from every angle.

What is your life plan and how will it affect your dog?

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