

Resource Guide for Service Animals



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This Resource Guide was created by Aidan Lawler from Troop 117 for my Eagle Scout Project to support the Autism Society of Oregon

My Journey to Get My Dog

My journey started when I was little as I was very fearful of dogs. However, I visited several dogs as I got older and the Humane Society many times to learn more about dogs with my parents. I researched the right type of dog breed for me and really wanted a “black one” so we could put an orange collar on him and name him “Benny” for “Benny the Beaver and Oregon State or OSU”. My Dad started looking on breeder websites and reached out to a few. I was on the waitlist for a dog, but unfortunately the dog born turned out to be a female and golden, so we had to try again. My Dad learned about a new lab born with another breeder that was male and black, so he reached out. My Dad talked to the breeder and about me and the puppy, who I now call “Benny”. The breeder told us about the puppy and his uniqueness (black with some light brown hair), which I liked because he was unique. The breeder explained the best things to have on hand and the food, and details best for the puppy. My parents and I researched Insurance, gear, and vets. We ended up selecting Lombard Animal Hospital and did an in-person visit where they even had a social story built to walk me through the vet experience before bringing Benny in the first time. We selected a pet plan as it seemed to provide the best coverage and ease and learned about how the plan worked. Then, we adventured to pick up Benny in Washington state. When we picked up Benny, I had an immediate bond with him. After that, we explored training, which we investigated one on one and group training but ended up using Avery as we needed Service Training. Avery met with me for almost 9 months, and we continue to keep in touch. I then explored more formalized training with another local dog place and helped to socialize Benny (Doggy Business). Today, I work daily with Benny, and he is now 3 and able to help me lots.

Here is some information about Avery:

<https://www.spectrumlife.org/blog/avery-brown-easypup-dog-training-and-coaching-419>.

What is a Service Animal?

Service Dogs

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (or ADA), a service dog is “a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.” **The work they do must be connected to the disability the person has.**

Examples of this are:

- Guide dogs helping blind people navigate their way around
- Detecting seizures or blood sugar levels
- Assisting with psychiatric issues like PTSD or schizophrenia.

Because these dogs perform specific tasks for these people, they are considered service dogs and have full rights to go anywhere with their owners, under the ADA.

Emotional Support Dogs

These dogs are not considered service dogs, because they don't perform a specific task in relation to a disability. They are comforting to be around, but since they aren't trained to respond to a specific situation or event, **they don't qualify as service dogs and so don't have the same rights.**

Therapy Dogs

These dogs also aren't considered service dogs. These dogs are usually **used to cheer up and provide comfort** to people in hospitals, college students during exams, people who have experienced traumatic events, and more. These dogs are usually owned by someone else who volunteers to come in and bring their dogs to help people. Because they also don't perform a specific task in response to a disability, they don't have the same access to spaces as service dogs.

Resources for Finding a Service Animal

If you are looking for a service animal here are some tips in finding the right dog (not in any particular order):

- Talk to your friends and family
- Search for a breed by Dog type here:
<https://puppyfinder.com/>
- Visit the humane society
- Reach out to local pet stores and trainers
- Look at local ads
- Look at American Kennel club (or AKC) specific sites
- Reach out to your local 4H

Functions & Restrictions of a Service Animal

Role / Rights	Description
<p data-bbox="110 339 451 407">Service Animal / Qualifies for ADA.</p> <p data-bbox="110 472 440 654">Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.</p> <p data-bbox="110 719 458 1016">Some State and local laws also define service animal more broadly than the ADA does. Information about such laws can be obtained from the relevant State attorney general's office.</p>	<p data-bbox="483 339 966 561">These are dogs who receive proper training and official certification to do those things which can be challenging for kids with any disability. Puppies cannot be trained before a certain age.</p> <p data-bbox="483 578 976 800">However, for the first year of their lives, they are kept with a puppy raiser. Not every dog can become a service dog. They are trained to go to a public place such as a mall where any untrained dogs are not allowed.</p> <p data-bbox="483 816 972 1039">When you are dealing with autism, you need dogs that are very calm, very quiet, and very laid back. Dogs who are loyal, friendly, forgiving of a child's mistake, understanding, and in tune with the child's needs is ideal.</p> <p data-bbox="483 1055 976 1243">While any dog with proper training can become a service dog, you should exclude breeds with traits that may make them less adept at being autism service dogs.</p> <p data-bbox="483 1308 940 1490">What autism service dogs can do totally depends on the person they are servicing. It depends on the needs of that child or adults with Autism and what they require.</p>

Functions & Restrictions of a Service Animal

Role / Rights	Description
Emotional Support / Does not qualify under ADA rights	Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support.
Companion Family Pet / Does not qualify for ADA rights.	<p>These are well-trained family pet. They can be a great companion for kids with autism. Your children will get unconditional love and friendship which will help to recover from Autism.</p> <p>Make them learn to take care of these dogs. This will make them responsible and practical.</p>
Therapy Dogs / Does not qualify for ADA rights.	<p>Therapy dogs are trained to provide affection and comfort in therapeutic situations. Typically, they work in hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare and mental health facilities. They can assist with physical or occupational therapy, or simply help calm a patient undergoing a stressful medical procedure.</p> <p>Outside of medical and institutional settings, therapy dogs have become popular in the autism community for their calming influence and ability to promote social interaction.</p>

Functions & Restrictions of a Service Animal

Role	How do they help with Autism?
Service Animal	<p>They are specifically trained to their owner's personal needs based on their medical condition. They may or may not include the following tasks described.</p> <p>Basically, they can provide support in following symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communication skills – the child learns to give dog commands- Awakening at Night – a dog will bark to alert parents- Self Harming Behavior – a dog will interrupt the behavior and alert parent- Social Isolation – child tends to focus on dog companionship- Reduce anxiety – a dog will crawl into a child's lap to calm a child
Emotional Support	<p>Well-trained emotional support dog can provide unconditional love and a sense of calming to a person with autism.</p>
Therapy Dog	<p>Can help to break the ice and motivate a child to mingle with others. When needed, therapy dogs can divert the attention of away from distractions and help focus on a task.</p>

Functions & Restrictions of a Service Animal

To determine if an animal is a service animal, you may ask two questions:












1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

You may not ask these questions if the need for the service animal is obvious.

Examples include when a dog is guiding an individual who is blind or is pulling a person's wheelchair. In addition:

- You may not ask about the nature or extent of an individual's disability
- You may not require proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal
- You may not require the animal to wear an identifying vest or tag
- You may not ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the task or work

Three Types of Support Animals
Which is Right For You?

		 Service Dog	 Therapy Dog	 Emotional Support Dog
 Is legally allowed to accompany the handler into stores, restaurants, libraries, etc.	✓	✗	✗	
 Must be allowed to live with owner even where there is a "no pets" policy.	✓	✗	✓	
 Can fly in the cabin of a plane with the handler.	✓	✗	?	
 Must be able to tolerate novel environments, experiences, and interactions.	✓	✓	✗	
 Is specially trained to help handler only with tasks the handler cannot perform due to a specific disability.	✓	✗	✗	
 Is trained to provide comfort to many others at the handler's direction.	✗	✓	✗	
 Primary function is to provide general emotional comfort to the handler only.	✗	✗	✓	
 Must wear special identifying gear.	✗	✓	✗	

Benefits and Questions of a Service Dog

Benefits

Emotional Benefits of a Service Dog

While physical benefits are the most obvious and immediate ways for a service dog to assist a person with disabilities, emotional benefits are also common for people who bring a service dog into their life. In general, pets boost their owner's level of social confidence and enable them to develop supportive relationships with others. The following emotional benefits are specific examples of this connection:

Companionship

Gaining a service dog means adding a loyal companion to your life that goes beyond typical canine devotion. A service dog can help and accompany you in many situations, and many service dogs can keep you accountable if you neglect proper management of their chronic illness or disability. This sense of security and consistent care will take some of the burden of your illness or disability of you. Additionally, with a service dog, you're not alone. It's very easy to feel isolated when a condition limits your ability to complete everyday tasks, but a dog provides companionship that can ease feelings of loneliness.

A Greater Feeling of Independence

You can rely less on other humans for help with tasks such as carrying something or opening a door. Instead, you can transfer your needs to your service dog, who is constantly available to assist and ready to be helpful. The toll of relying on other people for daily tasks can wear on you after a while, and despite eager family members and others who will step in, you may feel you are restricted and dependent on others. A service dog reduces or eliminates that feeling and brings back a sense of freedom.

Benefits and Questions of a Service Dog

Increased Confidence in Social Settings

Owning a service dog not only cultivates personal happiness, but it also increases socialization for people with disabilities. A service dog can empower you to become more active in social circles. Because you have your companion, you feel more comfortable in situations that you might previously have expected to be tiring or be unable to participate in. You may also notice you'll get attention from passersby. Though your dog is always on duty, and strangers cannot interact with your dog, this scenario is another way conversations and positive social interactions can be initiated. Even relationships with relatives are improved by the presence of service dogs. They are less worried about the person with a disability when they are absent. Home life with family members is less stressful with the aid of a service dog, too. Relationships can flourish when the service dog bears some of the responsibility in caring for a person and can alleviate some of the demanding tasks of the main caretaker.

More Motivation

Experiencing pain and challenges every day weighs many people with disabilities down, and fluctuations in health are taxing. Service dogs can help you regain motivation to handle the potential challenge of daily chores and bring some joy in day-to-day activities. A service dog still requires care from their owners, too, so that dependence and connection between dog and human creates a reason to keep going.

Benefits and Questions of a Service Dog

Self-Improvement

A service dog allows many people with disabilities to do things they did not think were possible and to frequent public places with less worry. The hope for new possibilities and further improvements that a service dog brings is comforting. People with disabilities can entertain ideas they did not think they could attain and set goals they did not think they could reach. The benefits of service dogs for disabled individuals include many positives, but an optimistic view of the future is a significant one.

Questions

Should You Get a Service Dog?

- If you have a disability that service dogs are trained to assist with, then a service dog may be right for you. If you're not sure your disability is extreme enough to have a service dog, decide whether your day-to-day life would become significantly easier and safer with the help of a dog.
- Getting a service dog does not happen immediately, as there must be a good fit between you and the dog as well as one that is trained specifically to cater to your disability.
- Service dogs also go through training for obedience, advanced disability service and personalized needs. This takes time, but if you are willing to invest in the system and training, you will have a trustworthy companion and service provider in your dog.

Benefits and Questions of a Service Dog

Please consider the following questions before obtaining a service dog:

1. Does your child like dogs?

A dog is not necessarily a child's best friend for all people. In fact, some people with autism are scared of animals, or dogs in particular. It is important to meet a few dogs before bringing one into the home; therapy dogs, since they're usually well-behaved, may be ideal for testing the waters.

2. Might your child or anyone else in the household have allergies that might be aggravated by a dog?

3. Is your family prepared and ready to take on the long-term commitment and expense of caring for a dog in sickness and in health?

4. Are you comfortable handling a dog while caring for your child in public?

Even with a highly trained service dog, many parents have told us they were surprised how difficult this could be. Remember, the dog is looking to you (the adult) for direction and commands. At the same time, your child may need your full attention.

5. What type of dog is best?

The touch of the dog and coat (single-coated versus short-coated dog) and sensory needs are important to consider. You want a dog that eases, rather than exacerbates, their owners' issues. Also consider that some breeds tend to be barkers, some breeds require lots of activity, some breeds are quite excitable—do your research to find a type of dog that fits your family's lifestyle. Beyond breed characteristics, consider choosing a dog who is naturally attracted to your family—and, most importantly, your kid. It's a good idea to take your child to meet prospective pups and watch how they interact before taking one home.

Benefits and Questions of a Service Dog

A service dog questions (continued):

6. Who is going to train the dog?

Even if you're not teaching the dog to do service tasks, you want your fur baby to reduce the general stress level in your household, not add to it with wild behavior.

A well-behaved, well-mannered, well-trained dog can work wonders, but a bouncing, leaping-on, licking-in-the-face dog that's stealing all their toys may have just the opposite impact.

It's wise to consult a professional trainer but know that you'll have to continue the trainer's work at home—it takes time and commitment to have a well-trained dog. But it may be worth it for you and your child.

It's about making sure that a dog is right for that child, and then finding the right training so that the dog is an asset and not a liability.

Guide for Initial Dog Care Schedule

First Visit **8 weeks of age**

- Physical Exam
 - DAP Vaccine 1st of 3
 - Bordetella Vaccine 1 Year
 - Internal Parasite Screen (Fecal sample)
 - Deworming Medication, Strongid

Second Visit **4 weeks post visit 1**

- Recheck Exam
 - DAP Vaccine 2nd of 3
 - Lepto Vaccine 1st of 2
 - Deworming Medication, Strongid

Third Visit **4 weeks post visit 2**

- Recheck Exam
 - DAP Vaccine 1 Year
 - Lepto Vaccine 1 Year
 - Mini Panel – baseline blood values
 - Microchip (If already spayed or neutered)

Fourth Visit **At or after 16 weeks of age**

- Rabies Vaccine – 1 Year
 - Recheck exam recommended

Months of Age **4-12 months**

- Time to spay or neuter
- Microchip

Puppy Training/Classes

Basic obedience, pet manners, socializing

Wonder Puppy

www.wonder-puppy.com

1500 NW 18th Ave #117, Portland
503-697-PUPS (7877) / 503-224 -1191

No Bonz About It

<https://www.nobonz.com/>

3351 NE Sandy Blvd #3351
Portland, OR 97232
503-234-5909

Dogs Dig It

<https://www.dogsdigitpdx.com/>

1132 SE Salmon St
Portland, OR 97214
503-236-8222

Bravo Dog Training

www.mybravodog.com

503-686-5890

Dog Days NW

www.dogdaysnw.com

7206 NE 37th Ave, Vancouver WA
360-608-0867

Joyce's Dogs

www.joycesdogs.com

Mill Creek or Shore Line, WA
206-819-7297

Sit Means Sit Dog Training – Portland - <https://sitmeanssit.com/>

Service Dog Training - <https://www.aysdogs.com/>

Gungho Training - <https://gunghodogtraining.com/>

4H:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/clackamas/dog-4-h-project>

Puppy Training/Classes

Excellent Trainers:

All the following trainers are endorsed by Green Dog Pet Supply as they believe in strengthening the relationship between dogs and humans by using behavioral science (never force) to create lasting, positive change for both dogs and their people. This means utilizing a positive, goal-based coaching framework that is responsive, collaborative & FUN.

For "serious" issues, contact:

- Lorena at Synergy Behavior (jwallace@gmail.com)
- Doug Duncan (dougduncan@gmail.com)
- Brie Blakeman (www.noblewoof.com)
- Dr Pachel, the veterinary behaviorist at Instinct Dog Training (www.instinctdogtraining.com)

For "regular" problems, contact these very skilled trainers:

- Heather Ohmart (heather@goodpupsit.com)
- Meredith Wilson (mermerwilson@gmail.com)
- Any of the trainers at Noble Woof (see them and read their stories at www.noblewoof.com)
- Any of the trainers at Instinct Dog Training (www.instinctdogtraining.com)

Classes can also be very helpful to get assistance with a variety of common dog training and behavior issues, and for starting out right with a new dog. Check their websites for up-to-date info:

- **Doggy Business**, run by Doug Duncan and Meredith Wilson mentioned above. They offer classes including puppy socialization, kindergarten, basic manners for older dogs, impulse control, Beyond the Basics, Nosework, Life Skills series, and Stop Pulling! among others. **Doggy Business** www.doggybusiness.net 4905 NE 42nd Ave, Portland 503-327-8877
- **Plucky Puppy** offers puppy socialization and kindergarten classes (www.pluckypuppy.com)
- **Synergy Behavior** offers veterinary behavior training and classes that include dog behavior training. They offer behavior training classes such as Reactive Rover. **Synergy Behavior Solutions** www.synergybehavior.com 2127 NW York Street, Portland 503-336-1202

Dog Health Care

Pet Insurance

Healthy Paws Pet Insurance & Foundation

www.healthypawspetinsurance.com 800-453-4054

- The most comprehensive illness and accident coverage
- Includes emergency care and alternative treatments

Pet Plan Pet Insurance www.gopetplan.com 866-467-3875

- Fewest restrictions on coverage
- Per-condition deductible (good for chronic conditions)

Embrace Pet Insurance www.embracepetinsurance.com 800-511-9172

- Illness and accident coverage
- Optional wellness plan covers spay/neuter

Trupanion www.trupanion.com 877-589-1863

- No limitations on illness and accident coverage
- Per-condition deductible (good for chronic conditions)

Pet First www.petfirst.com 855-270-7387

- Standard Plan: limits payout, many exclusions
- Lifetime Plan: better coverage, limited to \$20k per year

The above is provided for general information purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for professional veterinary care. The information (including pricing) is provided strictly as a guideline and is subject to change at our discretion. Note: It is best to get insurance before pre-existing conditions as it is hard to change if your puppy ends up needing care later, so it is truly "peace of mind" to have it.

Dog Health Care

Vaccines

Most veterinarians tailor vaccine protocols to the individual patient. Our goal is to protect from disease without giving unnecessary or excessive vaccines. Puppies should receive a series of vaccines beginning at 6-8 weeks of age until 16 weeks of age. This is because nursing puppies ingest antibodies from their mothers which provide early protection against infectious disease. However, they also neutralize the immunizing agents in vaccines. Maternal antibodies naturally decline during the first three to four months of life and eventually disappear.

DAP protects against Distemper, Adenovirus, and Parvovirus. Distemper is a highly contagious viral disease carried by raccoons. It causes diarrhea, fever, nasal, and ocular discharge progressing to neurological symptoms like seizing. It is often fatal, and the best protection is vaccination. Parvovirus causes severe vomiting and diarrhea and immunosuppression. Mortality is 60% and puppies are the most susceptible because of their limited body reserves. Adenovirus can cause liver and eye problems and can result in death or chronic illness. Puppies should start DAP series between 6-8 weeks of age and receive boosters every 4 weeks until 16 weeks of age. Dogs older than 16 weeks receive 2 initial boosters then an annual booster, then a booster every 3 years. Do not take your puppy to places where other dogs go until fully vaccinated.

Rabies bats in Oregon primarily spread this viral disease. It is 100% fatal once an animal or person is infected. The first vaccine is good for 1 year, and then the following boosters are good for 3 years. This vaccine is required for licensing, which is required by law for all dogs and cats in Multnomah County.

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection resulting from contaminated water or contact with the urine of infected wildlife and rodents. It causes symptoms of kidney and liver failure. This illness can be transmitted to humans by contact through breaks in the skin or mucus membranes.

Dog Health Care

Bordetella protects against the most common bacterial form of kennel cough. It does not protect against all causes. Symptoms include coughing, retching, sneezing, eye, and nasal discharge and rarely pneumonia. Most veterinarians recommend vaccination for dogs that go to places such as kennels, daycare, groomers, shows or dog parks.

Neutering & Spaying pets

Spaying “Ovariohysterectomy” - This is the removal of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus. Ideal age is 4-6 months for most dogs.

- Eliminates the risk of ovarian or uterine cancer, as well as uterine infection.
- Eliminates unwanted pregnancies.
- If spayed before the first heat cycle, your pet has less than 1% chance of developing breast cancer. If spayed after one heat cycle, your pet has an 8% chance of developing breast cancer. If spayed after two heat cycles, the risk increased to 26 percent. After two years, no protective benefit exists.

Neutering “Castration”

This is the removal of the testicles and spermatic cord. Ideal age is 4 to 6 months for cats and most dogs.

- Eliminates the risk of testicular cancer, the second most common tumor in male dogs.
- Greatly reduced the risk of prostate enlargement and prostatitis.
- Reduce the risk of perianal tumors.
- Reduces roaming and fighting.
- Eliminates or reduces spraying or marking in males neutered before 6 months of age or before the onset of these behaviors.
- Eliminates the risk and spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

Dog Health Care

Top 10 Most Common Toxic items for Dogs

Ibuprofen: A Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory for humans. Since this drug has been compounded for humans, it is not safe for a dog to ingest. The most common over the counter strength is 200mg but can range up to 800mg if a prescription. Problems that can arise from ingestion can be acute problems in the gastrointestinal tract, liver, and central nervous system. Signs to watch for are vomiting, diarrhea, blood in the stool, ulcers, abdominal pain, and renal failure (increased thirst and urination, lethargy, weakness, and the body's inability to process fluids properly) to such serious signs of depression, seizures, and coma.

Chocolate Toxicity: this depends on the amount of chocolate; the size of the dog and how much cocoa is present in the chocolate that has been ingested. For example, dark chocolate contains more cocoa than milk chocolate, so it is more dangerous. Some breeds are more sensitive to the cocoa than others and the smaller the dog, the smaller the amount needed to affect the body. The worst type of chocolate is unsweetened baking chocolate, containing the highest amount of cocoa. Even a very small amount can be life threatening to small dogs and cats. The effects can range from gastrointestinal upset: vomiting, diarrhea, lack of appetite to cardiovascular effects: increased heart rate, high blood pressure and irregular heartbeats.

Grapes, raisins, gum, and macadamia nuts are other common household foods that have toxic effects on pets.

Dog Health Care

Top 10 Most Common Toxic items for Dogs (continued)

Ant, Roach, and Slug Baits: These have two major concerns, the first being that they are designed with toxic ingredients to kill slugs, ants, and roaches. The toxins are usually in low enough doses that they won't kill a dog, but may cause stomach upset, other internal issues and can be an irritant. Slug bait however does cause serious problems and ingestion can be fatal. The second concern is as a foreign body, caused by the plastic container that houses the bait. This can get lodged, blocking the pathway anywhere in the gastrointestinal tract, from the esophagus to the large intestines. They irritate and harm the sensitive tissue. Also be aware that to attract the ants and other insects, sweetening agents, like bread and peanut butter are included to make the baits more enticing. Try using a pet friendly option, such as, iron phosphate to deter slugs instead.

Rodenticides: There are 3 main types of anticoagulants called Warfarin, Brodifacoum and Diphacinon: they all contain amounts of the anti-coagulants bromethalin and cholecalciferol, which are very toxic to dogs. Signs to watch for are signs associated with blood loss as well as depression, weakness, bleeding, bruising, and vomiting. Some rodenticides cause neurologic abnormalities rather than blood loss. Signs can also be delayed and not show up until 4 weeks after ingestion.

Acetaminophen: Also known as Tylenol. Like Ibuprofen, it irritates and causes problems in the stomach and intestinal tract and can damage the liver and kidneys. Please read the information with Ibuprofen or for other signs to watch for. This toxin can also be fatal for cats.

Pseudoephedrine: This is a type of cold medication for humans that can be found in products like DayQuil/NyQuil and Sudafed. Common signs of ingestion can be agitation, hyperactivity, panting, hypothermia, increased heart rate, head bobbing and dilated pupils. This drug affects a dog's central nervous system primarily and can severely dehydrate the dog.

Dog Health Care

Top 10 Most Common Toxic items for Dogs (continued)

Thyroid Hormones: These drugs can affect the dog's own ability to produce thyroid hormones in the body. The most common signs to watch for if ingested are increased heart rate and agitation.

Bleach: The household strength can be a mild to moderate irritant and areas that are usually affected are the skin and eyes. Other complications can be mild oral and esophageal burns, ulcers, and irritation to the gastrointestinal tract. Commercial strength can cause more serious complications, usually in the form of severe irritation to the same areas, resulting in bleeding ulcers.

Fertilizer: Different brands can all contain varying amounts of chemicals that can be toxic to animals. Usually, fertilizers will have a wide margin of safety if ingested but watch for signs of toxic reaction. Common signs to watch for are vomiting, diarrhea, increased salivation, and lethargy. These signs are more common in fertilizers that have high amounts of phosphorus and potassium compounds.

Hydrocarbons: Products like paint, paint removers, varnish, engine cleaner, furniture polish, lighter fluid, lamp oil, and fuel oil. Signs can include vomiting and diarrhea if ingested. Other problems can arise from prolonged contact with eyes or skin, resulting in corneal ulcers, dermal burns, or even systemic issues. If large amounts are ingested or left in contact with open wounds and mucous membranes more serious problems can arise such as central nervous system damage and heart damage.

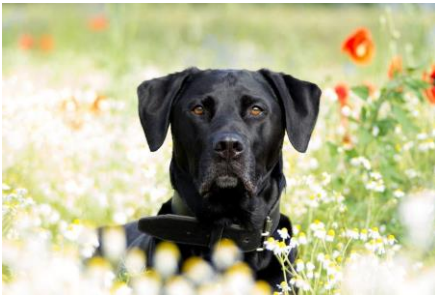
List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

So, What's the Best Dog Breed for Autism?

It really depends on your family and child with autism. Although these service dog breeds for autism are some of the most reliable and tested canines when it comes to helping children with special needs, it doesn't mean other dog breeds and mixes aren't going to be a good match. Just make sure to do your research to find a dog with a good temperament, ability to be trained, and the right maintenance and energy level for your family. And remember, before allowing a dog in your home and around your child, it's imperative to match your child's personality to the dog you ultimately choose. So... Which breed stands out to you?

Here are the some of the top best breeds for people with Autism:

Labrador Retriever



Hard-working, lovable, selfless, and kind, easy to train, calm, and eager-to-please personality of Labrador Retriever makes it the perfect choice for autism therapy. They are kind to everyone they meet and are a wonderful choice for bonding with children with autism.

List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

Golden Retriever



No list of family-friendly dogs would be complete without the Golden Retriever. This traditional breed is a top choice for service dogs of any variety and families with special needs children, specifically for children with autism spectrum disorder. Their happy-go-lucky personality, combined with a constant need to please their owners, makes Golden Retrievers an excellent choice for families with an autistic child. Gentle, patient, loving, and loyal Golden's have great personalities making them incredibly easy to train. This gentle breed has a calm temperament and decent intelligence, which is why they're often trained as emotional support or therapy dogs. Simply put, if you're looking for a forever friend who can have a significant impact on your child, look no further than the Golden Retriever.

List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

Great Pyrenees



Good luck finding a more devoted dog than the Great Pyrenees. The Great Pyrenees is gentle but with the fiercest loyalty to their human companions. This behavior trait makes them an excellent match for kids with autism who need a guardian and a dependable companion. If properly trained, this breed can be a full-time service canine. Due to their high level of intelligence, this breed can easily be taught to answer commands and perform specific tasks. Keep in mind that the Great Pyrenees needs ample exercise each day and continuous training to ensure they are properly disciplined.

List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

Staffordshire Bull Terrier



Staffordshire Bull Terriers may have a conflicting reputation, but they have proved to be docile, trustworthy, and loyal companions. Referred to as “nanny dogs,” these Terriers are naturally inclined to be gentle around small children. What better friend could any child ask for? With the proper training and care, these dogs can grow incredibly close and devoted to their families. Affectionate, playful, and outgoing, these protectors can be the perfect fit for kids with autism.

List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

Newfoundland



Believe it or not, this massive breed is another top choice for autistic children. They are very friendly and easy to train, not to mention incredibly intelligent. Despite their size and imposing look, Newfoundlands are one of the sweetest breeds on this list. While they may be large, Newfoundland's aren't particularly active dogs, so only consider adopting one if your child is less energetic. Usually used as therapy canines for children with mood disorders and autism, this breed's long history of serving children with special needs is a major assurance to parents. This fluffy pooch deserves very serious consideration by parents of children with autism.

List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

Labradoodle



Bred as a cross between a Poodle and a Labrador, the Labradoodle is a popular choice for families of children with autism. Since most breeds on this list may shed excessively, Labradoodles or Goldendoodles are great options for those who don't want a lot of excess hair around the house. While Labradoodles are not hypoallergenic, they are allergy-friendly, boosting their appeal to families who have respiratory sensitivities. This playful pooch comes in all sizes and colors, and they are rarely a 50-50 split of each breed, commonly resembling one more than the other. Either way, Labradoodles make great family dogs and are easy to train because of their high levels of intelligence. Thanks to these favorable characteristics, they are also a popular choice for therapy dogs. If you do go for this breed, be sure to account for brushing time and grooming costs.

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Saint Bernard



Most may recognize this gentle giant from the 1992 Box-Office hit *Beethoven*, but for the purposes of this list, the Saint Bernard has made it to the top of our lineup for his disciplined demeanor. The Saint Bernard is exceedingly gentle despite its large size. Although this breed might have a bit of a stubborn nature, Saint Bernards are also patient, gentle, and sweet with small children, making them an excellent option for families with autistic children. These dogs are loyal and simple tasks are a breeze for them. Saint Bernards are well suited to work as therapy dogs, but due to their large size, it would be difficult for them to be service dogs full-time as they may unintentionally overpower a small child.

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Collie



Lassie, is that you!? This loyal breed is the quintessential family dog, and their innate intelligence, along with their eagerness to please make them easy to train as therapy dogs for autistic children. Mild-mannered, gentle, and good with kids, the Collie has been bred to be highly aware of human emotions, which is an important trait for parents considering a dog for a child on the spectrum. This elegant breed is naturally playful but will not wander off from their owners, making Collies the perfect match for newbie dog owners.

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German Shepherd



If a protector is what you're looking for, then a German Shepherd is the dog for your family. Highly regarded as one of the smartest canines, German Shepherds are usually the first choice when it comes to recruiting for military and private security. German Shepherds are generally very focused and do not get distracted easily. Because of this, they will listen to their owner intently and can handle complicated tasks. Although they are cautious with strangers, German Shepherds are gentle and loyal. They can easily keep up with a kid's energetic nature or tone down as needed.

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Bernese Mountain Dog



Bernese Mountain dogs are another great family-dog breed. Their combination of size, calm temperament, and intelligence makes them especially practical as companions for a child with ASD. Bernese Mountain dogs are both eager to please and easy to train, not to mention their heartwarming presence that could put a smile on anyone's face. They love being of service, and they are sensitive, which means they need plenty of love and affection. This exchange of love will help foster an even stronger bond between pup and kid. Unfortunately, the breed is known for drooling and heavy shedding, which some families may find off-putting. Both, however, are minor issues for such otherwise-awesome dogs.

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Samoyed



The Samoyed is an intelligent dog that is easy to train and eager to please, making them the perfect companion for your entire family, especially for a child on the spectrum. Fluffy and fun-loving, the Samoyed is one of those breeds that always look like they're smiling. Just know that they can be highly energetic, so daily exercise and rigorous training are both a must.

List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

Beagle



While Beagles may not be ideal for all kids with autism spectrum disorder, they may be precisely what some other families need. Unlike the other gentle giants on this list, Beagles usually max out at about 30 pounds! Rarely intimidating to anyone, this compact breed will often greet every person they encounter with a wagging tail and smiling expression. They are playful, loving, and gentle but beagles can be vocal dogs as well. Their barking may be irritating to some kids, so be sure to take that into account especially if your child has sound sensitivities. Beagles are also independent by nature, so training them can be a bit challenging. They are smart dogs, but they care less about doing your bidding and more about playing and doing their own thing.

List of Recommended Dog Breeds for People with Autism

Poodle



Much like the Golden Retriever, Poodles have earned an impressive reputation as both therapy and service canines. Thanks to this breed's keen intelligence, they can be taught to perform complex tasks when needed. These pint-sized pooches are smart and obedient to their owners. Poodles are also hypoallergenic, which makes them the perfect dog for families with members suffering from allergies. Due to their playful yet gentle ways, Poodles make for the ideal companions to autistic children. Empathetic by nature, poodles become attuned to their owners' feelings and can sense negative emotions as they arise, making them the perfect emotional support dog. If you want a support dog for your kid who prefers a small and less furry breed, Poodles are your best bet.

Recommended Dog Accessories

Travel carriers

- Wakytu TSA Approved Pet Carrier for Small Medium Cats and Dogs | Dog Carrier with Adequate Ventilation | 4 Mesh Windows, 3 Entrance, Locking Safety Zippers, Padded Shoulder and Carrying Strap
- Morpilot Pet Travel Carrier Bag, Portable Pet Bag - Folding Fabric Pet Carrier, Travel Carrier Bag for Dogs or Cats, Pet Cage with Locking Safety Zippers, Foldable Bowl, Airline Approved
- Premium Pet Carrier Airline Approved Soft Sided for Cats and Dogs Portable Cozy Travel Pet Bag, Car Seat Safe Carrier

Travel Blankets

Like people, dogs enjoy sleeping on a comfortable bed and snuggling up with a blanket on a cool night. And while pets would be happy to make do with any blanket lying around your home, the best dog blankets offer benefits that regular blankets do not.

Notably, dog blankets are designed in different sizes for a range of dog breeds, but most are smaller than a typical human blanket. That means that they're better able to fit on top of a dog bed or inside a crate, and their smaller size also means less to wash. Plus, some soft dog blankets even have a furry or shag-like texture that many pups may find comforting. For your car or a couch, pet owners may also want to consider a water-resistant or waterproof dog blanket that doubles as a furniture cover while protecting the car or couch's exterior from hair, drool, and accidents.

Since dogs can be messy, all the best dog blankets are also machine-washable and dryer-safe.

Recommended Dog Accessories

Keep in mind if you're buying a blanket for your pup for the first time that some dogs may not necessarily "get" how to cuddle under it, especially if they've never used one before and are not a breed that's known for burrowing behaviors. In my experience with my own dog, it may take you gently placing a blanket over their body a few times before they realize how enjoyable snoozing under a warm blanket can be.

Here are some suggested dog blankets:

- Furrybaby Fleece Dog Blanket



- Best Friends by Sheri Shag Blanket



- PetAmi Dog Blanket (good for large dogs)



Recommended Dog Accessories

Suggested dog blankets (continued):

- Winner Outfitters Dog Car Seat Cover



- Waterproof Pet Blanket, Pee Urine Proof Dog Blanket for Couch Bed, Soft Reversible Furniture Protector Cover



- Comsmart Warm Blanket for Dogs



Taking Care of Your Dog

How to Feed Your Dog

- **Give several small meals.** Depending on his age, your puppy should be given 3 meals a day at scheduled times. Always give the food in the same bowl placed in the same area. This will train your puppy to have good eating habits.
- **Don't overfeed.** Calculating a puppy's daily energy requirement:
- **Weight in Lbs. X 15 + 70** (resting energy requirement) **should be about 3 times** the resting energy requirement until fully grown. It can be difficult to have a standard calculation for a puppy's caloric intake. You will need to re-evaluate the amount of food offered based on your puppy's individual growth habits.

House Training

- Take your puppy out frequently especially after every meal, nap, playtime, before bed and as soon as you get up in the morning.
- Take your puppy to the same place to eliminate every time.
- Reward your puppy when she eliminates outside.
- Never punish or reprimand a puppy who has an accident.

Biting:

It is normal for puppies to chew on body parts, clothing, and random objects around the house. Normally this will go away with time, but there are things we can do to help discourage this behavior. It's a good idea to offer your puppy an alternate toy or chew instead of your hands. This help redirect your puppy to something more appropriate. If the puppy continues to bite a short time out, either in a crate, or different room is appropriate. Most puppies will soon learn that chewing on your hand equals no play.

Taking Care of Your Dog

Good Chews vs. Bad Chews:

Not all chew treats are created equal. Some treats work well to keep our pets occupied and to maintain dental health. Other chews have the opposite effect and can harm teeth. For example, tennis balls have a fiberglass coating that can injure a pet's mouth. *All* chews have the possibility of causing gastrointestinal issues or dental damage, but here is a list of chews most veterinarians recommend and chews we *don't*:

Good Chews:	Bad Chews:
Rubber Ball Nyla Bone - Gumma Bone Only Greenies Dentabones Rawhide strips <i>without</i> knots on the end Puzzle toys Kong toys Bully sticks	Compressed rawhide Knuckle bones Bone Rawhide with knots Nyla bones (Hard) Hooves Rocks Pig ears Tennis balls

Basic manners

- All puppies should be taught basic manners including: "Come", "Sit", "Down", and "Stay". All of these can be taught by "shaping" the behavior with a food reward.
- Use positive reinforcement to facilitate the training process. For most pets this will be food, but some puppies will respond more to affection, or a toy. As the pup learns the desired behavior, begin to offer the reward on a less predictable basis. This will encourage a longer attention span.
- Keep training sessions short and consistent.
- Teach one command at a time.
- Use both verbal and visual cues e.g., "good" dog with a food reward or use of a clicker to time the auditory cue at the exact moment the desirable behavior is offered.

Taking Care of Your Dog

Socialization

- An important time for socializing puppies to new sounds, sights, smells, and situations is the first 12 weeks of life and should continue into adulthood. The more people and other animals the puppy are exposed to, the less likely she is to be fearful of novel situations.
- From 7 weeks of age gradually begin to expose your puppy to a wide variety of people of different genders, children, mailmen and other animal species. Give a small food reward whenever she meets someone new.
- Take your puppy on plenty of walks and outings including the car and elevators.
- It is important to avoid dog parks and any areas where lots of other dogs are “toileting” until she has completed her vaccination course at 15-16 weeks of age.
- Expose her to new sounds like sirens, traffic, alarm signals. Recordings of these kinds of sounds can be purchased too. Start off with quiet noises and gradually build up to greater duration and intensity. Always reward calm, non-fearful behavior with treats.
- Begin puppy training or basic obedience classes at 12 weeks of age once your pup has been vaccinated for bordetella and has had her second distemper/parvo vaccine.

Appreciation & Acknowledgements



I would like to thank the following people and business that provided support to make my Eagle Scout Project happen:

- Green Dog Pet Supply
- Pets on Broadway
- Office Depot #888
- First Mate
- Kong
- Coastal Pet LLC
- Doggone Clicker Company
- BSA Cascade Council
- Autism Society of Oregon
- BSA - Troop 117 / 5117
Portland, OR
- Christine Maller
- Alexander Moreland
- Jayne Lawler
- Kristi Bardi
- Karen Niedermeyer
- Lina Reiss
- Sarah Drescher
- Balto Family
- Laure & Anthony Cast
- Teri Ikeda
- Rose Neyman
- Stephen Klein
- Leslie Bray
- Jennifer Anderson
- Sean Moreland
- Carrie Carlson
- Cassandra Mastne
- Linda Ledwidge
- Sheryl Carson
- Andy Dong
- Ramsey Family
- Ann Sheridan
- Susan Bailey
- Cindy Schnabel
- Santos Family
- Terdal Family
- Berit Helser
- Wasser Family
- McPartland Family
- Michael Scharf in memory of Sue Boos
- Shanon Adamson-John
- Graham Houser
- Stuart & Rebekah Davidson
- Liz Koopman
- Laura Barry
- Friends and Family with Packing
- And Several Anonymous Donors

Troop 117



Portland, Oregon