

# ***Info shared by Pitbull SA.***

***Manjaro APBT kennel.***

***South Africa.***

***My Website [www.pitbullsa.co.za](http://www.pitbullsa.co.za)***

***My E mail "[manjaro@pitbullsa.co.za](mailto:manjaro@pitbullsa.co.za)"***

***My Facebook "Gawie Manjaro"***

***My Facebook page "Manjaro Kennel"***

***My mobile +27827838280.***

***Zello.com "VoIP" – ask for info***

## ***Life lessons having a puppy or dog.***

***[Dr. Becker](#)***

Story at-a-glance.

Caring for a dog teaches children responsibility, trust, compassion, respect and patience.

Other valuable life lessons of dog ownership include loyalty and the importance of physical activity.

Dog ownership may also boost self-esteem, promote better grades at school and improve health among children.

It's very important to insure your child is ready, willing and able to care for an animal before deciding what type of dog to bring home.

Kids and dogs just seem to go together, don't they?

Dogs offer children companionship, affection and unconditional acceptance.

They are also great teaching tools. In fact, your child can learn much from caring for a puppy and or dog, including these 10 valuable life lessons.

1. Responsibility — Caring for a puppy and or dog requires daily feeding, exercise and playtime, as well as grooming and potty walks. Older children with a dog learn what it means to care for another living creature, and even younger children can help with feeding and playtime.

2. Trust — it's easy to confide in a dog who offers unconditional support in return.

[Pets make wonderful trusted companions for children](#) and can be a first step in helping your child build trust in other relationships too.

3. Compassion — Caring for a dog requires compassion, understanding and empathy.

Kids learn to be kind and to take care of others' basic needs.

4. Bereavement — when a beloved dog dies, your child will inevitably [feel the pain of the loss](#), but through this they will learn also learn how to cope with sadness and grief.

5. Respect — caring for a dog teaches kids how to respect others. For example, they learn the proper way to approach, touch, and hold their puppy or dog and tend to their needs.

They learn not to disturb the puppy or dog when they eat or sleep.

6. Self-esteem — Dogs show unconditional love, which can be a great boost to a child's self-esteem.

So, too, can the satisfaction that comes from having responsibility and a puppy or dog as a friend who relies on you.

7. Loyalty — a dog's loyalty toward their human master is unmatched. In turn, children learn the importance of showing loyalty to their devoted animal companion.

8. Physical activity — Children with dogs learn how fun physical activity can be while they play tug-of-war, fetch or go for walks with their dog. Research shows that children with dogs spend more time being physically active than children without dogs.<sup>1</sup>

9. Patience — bonding with a new puppy or dog often takes time. Your child will learn patience while the new dog becomes comfortable in your home and also during training.

10. Social skills — Dogs make wonderful icebreakers for both kids and adults.

Taking your dog for walks as a family can [improve your child's social skills](#) as you interact with others.

Dogs may also help children with autism develop social skills such as sharing.

There are many other benefits as well.

Your child can have their basic emotional and physical needs fulfilled by a dog, including comforting contact, love and affection.

Research also shows that [children from homes with dogs](#) (during their first year of life) have fewer ear infections and respiratory tract infections, and require fewer antibiotics, perhaps because the exposure stimulates the immune system.<sup>2</sup>

Other noted benefits include a significantly reduced risk of allergies and even better grades at school, presumably because owning a dog seems to give kids greater motivation.

Is your child ready for a dog?

Some children are ready at a young age to take on the responsibility of a dog.

Others, not so much. Here are a few things to consider as you decide whether your [youngster is ready for pet guardianship](#), as well as a few tips on how to search and prepare for your new family member.

Wait until your child is old enough — Wait for your child to express consistent, genuine interest in having a dog.

It's usually children over the age of 5 who begin to show real interest in

a dog or other animal.

That's a good thing, because children younger than 5 cannot handle the responsibility of caring for a dog.

Toddlers and very young kids are much more likely to injure an animal, or risk being injured themselves by a fearful or startled dog.

Don't give your child a dog before she asks for one — I don't recommend giving a child a dog as a surprise, or insisting a youngster should have a dog of his own.

It's better for everyone involved, including the animal, if your child is eager for the responsibility of a dog and is prepared.

Do consider getting a pet for a levelheaded, responsible child — Honestly evaluate your child's maturity and responsibility level, no matter how old they are.

If the child is mature for their age, takes direction well, uses common sense, has a calm nature and shows empathy for animals, such a child is probably ready for a dog of their own.

Don't hand over a defenseless animal to an inconsiderate or immature child — If, on the other hand, your child is forgetful, careless, reckless, extremely self-absorbed or tends to get themselves into scrapes someone else has to get them out of, such a child might not yet be mature or responsible enough to care for a dependent, defenseless creature.

Talk to your child about the commitment he is making — When you discuss acquiring a pet with your youngster, cover the topic of permanency.

Help your child understand dogs are not like toys that can be tossed aside or given away if people grow bored with them.

Make sure the child understands the commitment they make is for the lifetime of the dog.

Also prepare for the possibility your child will grow tired of caring for the dog.

In that case, it is you and other family members who must pick up the

slack and take over care of the animal.

Assign pet care responsibilities before the animal arrives — Set dog caretaking expectations ahead of time.

I recommend discussing with your child and other family members all house rules for the new dog and who will have responsibility for what. It's a good idea to write everything down and post it in spot where your child can easily refer to it.

Feeding and interacting with the dog is the fun part of pet ownership, but there are many dirty, cumbersome and not-so-fun aspects of daily care that kids must be ready to take on, as well.

Research types of dogs with your child — This will help both of you learn what's involved in caring for a variety of different animals.

It will also give both of you an opening to discuss any concerns you have about whether your child is ready to take on such an important responsibility.

Financial considerations, time constraints and your living situation will also factor into the choice of a dog.

Consider testing your child's readiness for a dog by starting small — Unless you're prepared to share primary caretaking responsibilities for a pet like a dog, cat or exotic bird with your child, I recommend you start small.

You can begin with a couple of fish or a frog if you're really unsure of your child's level of commitment.

Or you can start with a pocket pet like a [rat](#) or a guinea pig.

However, don't assume because a pet is small or lives in a cage it doesn't require much care.

All animals require attention in order to be healthy and balanced.

Both pocket dogs and [pet birds](#) require lots of interaction and plenty of time outside their habitats.

That's why research and preparation are priceless when it comes to a decision about what type of pet is best for your child.

Exhaust adoption options before purchasing a pet — Depending on the

type of pet you and your child choose.

Having a pet will help your child understand the plight of homeless animals, as well as how terrific it feels to provide a forever home for a pet.

Make a family commitment to care for the pet for its lifetime — If your child loses interest in a new pet, be prepared to set the right example by not giving up the animal.

Your child should learn responsibilities don't just disappear when they grows tired of them.

Each member of your family must be willing to take care of any pet you adopt for its lifetime.