

Your Child Brought Home a Dog

Although growing up you were fortunate to have a pet friend, its loss did make you suffer greatly and you decided not to risk exposing your kids to the same experience of them having to cope one day with the loss of their animal friend. But, life always finds a way to surprise you when you least expect it and one evening your son or daughter might enter the house accompanied by a stray dog. You will probably think that this is a very bad idea, but your son's eyes will beg you to reconsider and allow his new friend to stay "Please, just for a few days; until we find someone who wants to adopt it." Now you know how that story will go. The days will pass and your new visitor will still be in your house, messing around with your shoes and licking his plate all the way from the kitchen floor to the living-room carpet creating a mess. But when he will put his head on your lap for you to touch it on the head, you will catch yourself smiling and thinking that this is not a bad idea after all. Well, it is certainly not.

Researchers have found evidence suggesting that kids who grow up having a pet companion learn a lot from this relationship. The connection formed is not only beneficial to the animal, but also to the child. Kids that have pets become responsible sooner and behave proactively. These are just two of the positive outcomes your child will experience from your decision to allow a "stranger" to enter your house. The lessons a child will learn from being close to an animal can have a tremendous effect to its personality and behavior; today and in the future. Having to take the dog out for a walk, visiting the veterinarian's office every six months, washing the dog or playing with it, will not only be some of your kid's future cherished memories, but also some rather life-changing experiences.

Only good can come out from your child learning to be respectful and affectionate to an animal. By living with a dog, your child will for the first time in his or her life learn what it feels like to take care of another living-soul. Moreover, the happiness and comfort such a relationship will bring to your kid's life cannot be easily ignored or compared with anything else he or she will later decide to experience. Respecting someone else's needs and thinking of their well-being are extremely important lessons for the formation of your child's future character and you will be later thanked for being tolerant and supportive.

Do not be intimidated from the fact that your child will consider his or her new pet friend just like he or she does with a new toy; fun and wonderful at the beginning, annoying and boring later. This is actually your chance to teach your child what it means to love unconditionally and to protect one's life. From the trips to the nearby park to your family's summer vacations, your child will have a first-hand experience on how rewarding and fulfilling it can be to cultivate such an intimate relationship and what it entails to keep it flourishing and rewarding.

Finally, the risk of losing the dog, or the reality that it will one day die, cannot be underestimated. It is true that kids become psychologically attached to their pets, but so do adults. There is no easy way to say goodbye to a beloved companion, but no bigger lesson exists there in life. Understanding what death is, learning to accept it, and finding ways to cope with it, are not processes one has to go through when he or she is an adult. Perhaps then it will be too difficult for your child to become conscious of the loss.

Pets can be the most fulfilling experience a kid can have and it is always time to open your door and your soul to that stray dog he or she will bring in. Life gives no guarantees that happiness and bliss will last forever. Nevertheless, your kid will become a better individual if he or she is given a chance to experience life through the eyes of a dog.

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