

Happiness is a Warm Puppy:

Animal Assisted Therapy in Inclusive Classroom Settings

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Animal Assisted Therapy

- 🐾 Involve using specially trained animals as catalysts
- 🐾 Animal assist in facilitating the therapeutic or learning process
- 🐾 It is not a substitute form of therapy

Therapy Dogs

- 🐾 Therapy dogs are trained for social interaction. Their purpose is to provide comfort, stress relief, and psychological and physiological therapy to individuals other than their handlers.

Function

- 🐾 Functions of a therapy dog are to be petted by others to relieve stress, promote physical or emotional well being
- 🐾 They can assist during therapy to help an individual meet specific goals
- 🐾 Therapy dog and their handlers typically work as a team for short periods of time (i.e., 1 to 2 hours) during a preplanned visit



To err is human to forgive is canine.
~Anonymous

Requirements

- All dogs **must** be certified therapy dogs
 - 🐾 Passed evaluation or equivalent screening
 - 🐾 Current on all shots, including rabies
 - 🐾 Well groomed and clean



*Outside of a dog a book is man's best friend.
Inside a dog it's too dark to read.*
~Groucho Marx

Specialized Dog Skills

- 🐾 📖 Comfortable with children
- 🐾 📖 At ease with crowds, noise, petting, and hugs
- 🐾 📖 Reliable in novel situations
- 🐾 📖 Able to lie or sit quietly with a child for long periods

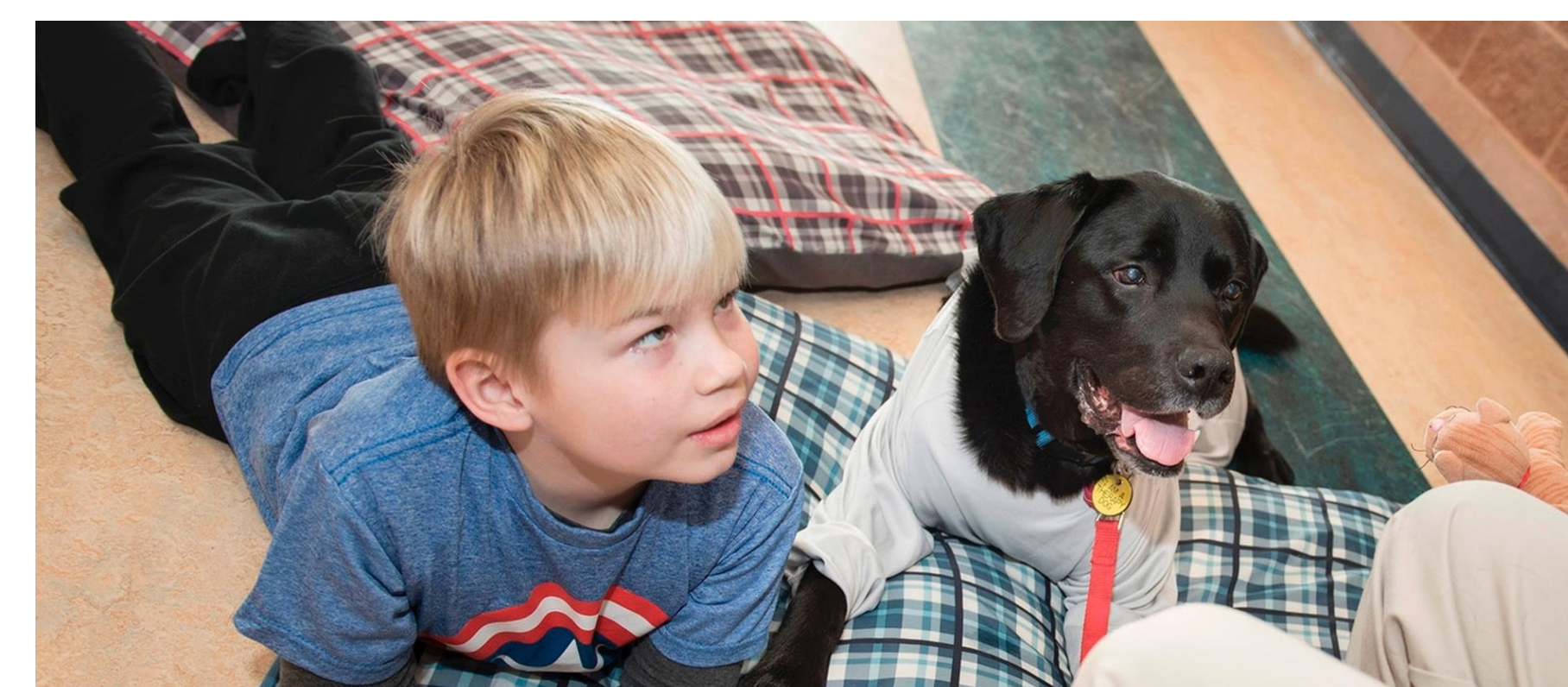
Handler Responsibilities

- 🐾 📖 Providing appropriate equipment
- 🐾 📖 Properly identifying therapy dog and themselves
- 🐾 📖 Following rules for entering and leaving building



Benefits for Students with Learning Disabilities

- 🐾 Higher self-esteem
- 🐾 Increased empathy
- 🐾 Improved behavior (Increased assignment Promotes relaxation)
- 🐾 Elicits communication



A dog teaches a boy fidelity, perseverance, and to turn around three times before lying down.
~Robert Benchley

Program Development

- 🐾 Gaining Permission
 - 📖 Consult with administration
 - 📖 Consider willingness of a school to accept animals
 - 📖 Be prepared to address legal and liability issues
- 🐾 Consider funding sources such grants if materials are needed
- 🐾 Secure administrative and faculty support
- 🐾 Positive teacher attitude toward program is important for success

Parental Support

- 🐾 Contacts
 - Letters and phone contact
- 🐾 Securing permission
 - Permission slips and photo releases

Note

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, therapy dogs are not Service Animals.

Preparing Children for a Visit

- 🐾 All children should be informed of expected behavior around dogs
- 🐾 No running or yelling around the dogs
- 🐾 Sit quietly while reading or petting dog
- 🐾 Scratch dog under chin or on back only

Organizations

- 🐾 Therapy Dog International
<https://www.tdi-dog.org/default.aspx>
- 🐾 Pet Partners
<https://petpartners.org/>
- 🐾 Alliance of Therapy Dogs
<https://www.therapydogs.com/>



Children and dogs are as necessary to the welfare of the country as Wall Street and the railroad.
Harry S. Truman

