

Games Pooches Play!

All dogs love to play – even as adults. Playtime strengthens your relationship with your dog and keeps your pooch from getting bored. Try some of these games with your best buddy!



Fetch!

Everyone knows this game and even reluctant dog fetchers will catch on if the reward is worth it – a favourite treat! The key to teaching a dog to fetch is to practice “drop it” first,

otherwise you will end up with a different game – “keep away.” If your dog doesn’t drop the ball, end the game and walk away. After a few times of a quick end to playtime your dog will learn that the fun continues if you play by the rules.

Hide and Seek

Try putting your dog in a stay with her head facing away from your play area. Now go and hide. When you are ready, call her name and see how long she takes to find you. Not only can this be fun but it also teaches your dog to wait until she is called.



Treasure Hunt

Similar to Hide and Seek except you hide treats and see how quickly your dog finds them. Start by letting her sniff the treat, keep her in a stay and then hide the treat. As she gets the hang of it you can hide the treats in more difficult to find places and farther distances. This is the basic strategy of how search and rescue dogs are trained as well as dogs that find fruit or drugs in airport luggage.

Agility

Dog agility is an obstacle course for dogs. There are jumps, tunnels, weave poles, tires and see-saws that your dog must complete in the quickest possible time. You can set up your

Hint: Use treats to lure your dog the first few times through the course.



own agility course in

your backyard using household objects such as old mop handles for weave poles, a hoola-hoop for a tire jump and jumps made with two chairs with a stick across it.

Slowly withdraw treats and use praise with word associations for the actions you want the dog to learn. Try using words like “jump” or “weave” and say “good dog” when she completes the task. Try giving a treat or favourite toy at the end for a reward for completing the course.

Does everyone in your family want a dog?
Dogs become family members! Everyone should agree with the decision to get one.

Does your family know how to care for a dog?

Learn as much as you can before you bring a dog home. This guide provides some basic care information. You can find out more from care books, veterinarians, animal shelter staff and people you know who have dogs.



What is your family's schedule like? Dogs need a dependable routine. They have to be fed, walked and played with every day. Families that are gone all day and then out again in the evening would leave a dog home alone too long.

Do you have a particular breed in mind? Some people are drawn to a certain breed because they have seen one in a movie or on television, or read about one in a book. Do your research first! Talk to people who have the breed you are interested in. Find out what the dogs are really like to live with. See whether the breed has any health issues.

Above all, keep an open mind! Mixed-breed dogs make awesome pets, too.

Are you allowed to have a dog where you live? Unfortunately, not all buildings allow dogs. Some places are pet friendly but have restrictions on how big a dog you can keep.



Companions for Life

Questions to ask yourself before you get a dog

Bringing a dog into your family is a big decision. As his guardian, you will be responsible for taking good care of him for his whole life — 11 years on average. It means walking him in the pouring rain. Cleaning up his messes. Waking up early on the weekends to let him out.

It also means playing hide-and-go-seek together. Reading a book while he dozes beside you. Watching him wrestle with his favourite dog friends. Coming home from school each day to a wagging tail and wet tongue.

Being a dog guardian is both work AND fun. Is your family ready to make the commitment?



Where should you get your dog? Make the BC SPCA your first adoption option! BC SPCA shelters have dogs of all different ages, colours, sizes and shapes to choose from — even purebreds. Check out our adoptable listings at bcpetsearch.com.

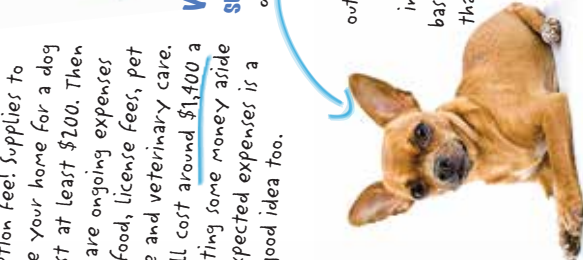
You can also find your new companion through a breed rescue or responsible breeder. Visit findingfido.ca to learn how to spot a good breeder — and avoid puppy mills. Puppy mills are places where dogs are bred in large numbers and sold through pet stores or on the internet just to make money. The dogs are often kept in very poor conditions. Most do not receive the medical care or socialization they need to be good companions.

Can your family afford a dog? Think beyond the adoption fee! Supplies to prepare your home for a dog will cost at least \$200. Then there are ongoing expenses such as food, license fees, pet insurance and veterinary care. These will cost around \$1,400 a year. Setting some money aside for unexpected expenses is a good idea too.

Do you have any other pets? Not all dogs get along with animals such as cats and vice versa. Your home should be a safe and comfortable place for all your pets.

— woof!

How old a dog should you get? Puppies are a blast! They are also a TON of work to socialize and train. As a dog grows up, his personality develops. So you know a little more about what you are getting into with an older dog compared to a puppy.

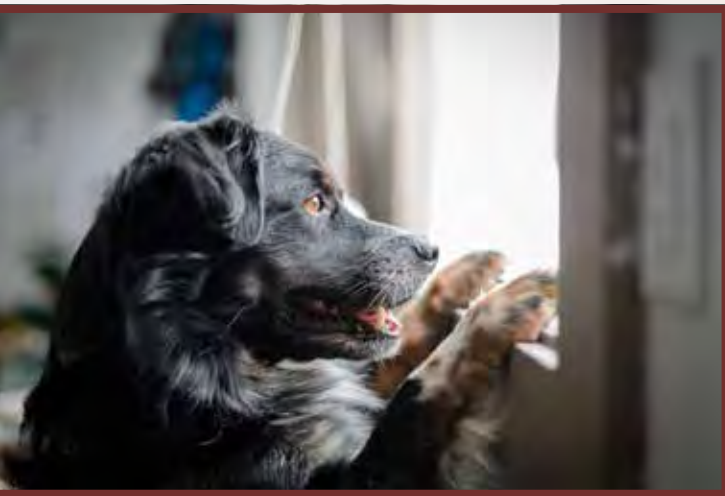


What dog personality will suit your family? Dogs have different personalities. Some are shy and anxious, while others are excitable and outgoing. Some are very people focused. Others are more independent. Choosing a dog based on his personality rather than his looks tends to lead to a better relationship.



Are you ready to get a dog?

Dogs make wonderful companions. Yet, they are also a huge responsibility. Is your family ready to adopt a dog? Test if you think your family is prepared by carefully considering these questions.



First off, are you allowed to have a dog where you live?

Some places are not pet-friendly, while others may only allow cats or small dogs.

Does everyone in your family want a dog?

Everyone should be in agreement to get a dog. After all, your dog will be part of the family.



Can your family afford a dog?

There are real costs when you have a dog. Initial expenses include the adoption fee, spay/neuter, training classes, microchip ID, leash, collar, harness, crate, bowls, toys and a dog bed. The ongoing costs include food, treats, vet insurance, teeth cleaning, grooming, licenses, replacement toys, beds and leashes . . . and more.

Yikes, this adds up! Can you guess the average yearly cost of having a medium-sized dog? Is it \$500, \$1,200 or \$2,500? Trick question! Teeth cleaning alone costs between \$800 and \$1500. So it will cost at least \$1,200 but likely closer to \$2,500.



Is this your first dog?

There is a lot to know when you have a dog. Things like how to train your dog using humane, reward-based methods. Knowing to look for health issues like ear mites, fleas and ticks or food allergies. Learn more by reading care books and info online. Also talk to SPCA shelter staff and people you know who have dogs.

How will having a dog change your family?

You will be caring for him for his whole life – 11 years on average. There are plenty of not-so-fun things, like walking him in the pouring rain when you would rather stay inside. Cleaning up his messes when you feel like playing video games instead. Waking up early on the weekends to take him out for a bathroom break.

What are the great things?

You will enjoy playing together – games like hide-and-seek, chase and fetch. Reading books while he dozes beside you. Having a buddy to just hang out with. There's nothing better than coming home from school to a wagging tail.

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Where to get your pet

Make the BC SPCA your first adoption option! BC SPCA shelters have dogs of all different ages, colours, sizes and shapes to choose from – even purebreds. Check out our adoptable listings at bcpetsearch.com.

More adoption options

You can also find your new companion through a breed rescue or responsible breeder. Visit spca.bc.ca/breeders to learn how to spot a good breeder.

Where NOT to get a dog

Avoid puppy mills. Puppy mills are places where dogs are bred in large numbers and sold through pet stores or on the internet just to make money. The dogs are often kept in very poor conditions. Most do not receive the medical care or the socialization they need to be good companions.

Don't go by looks or "breed" alone

It may be tempting to get a certain breed because you've seen one in a movie or on television. Do your research first! Talk to people who have the breed you are interested in. Find out what the dogs are really like to live with. See whether the breed has any health issues. Above all, keep an open mind! Mixed-breed dogs make awesome pets, too.



Dogs have different personalities

How dogs look has little to do with their personalities. Just because your friend has a calm, relaxed Jack Russell terrier doesn't mean they are all like that – they're not! Some dogs are shy and anxious, while others are excitable and outgoing. Some are very people-focused. Others are more independent. Choosing a dog based on his personality rather than his looks tends to lead to a better relationship.

