

# Family Pet Adoption Tips

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**Choosing the next furry addition to your family can sometimes be a challenge with so many options and common misconceptions about pet adoptions. The Arizona Humane Society is available to help you narrow down what kind of critter you should welcome into your home.**

Owning a pet offers many positive mental and physical health benefits, as well as unconditional love and companionship, says Bretta Nelson, of the Arizona Humane Society. Having a pet to spend quality time with creates healthy relationships for both the animal and the person and can be a very positive experience.

People often think that only young pets are good to introduce to your family because they are untrained and more open to change. This can be the case for some pets, but every animal has a background of some sort, and regardless, any pet can adapt to their new environment with the correct amount of love and care necessary for them individually. Cats and dogs are very different from each other and vary between breeds, so do as much as you can to research the type of breeds you're interested in to get a general idea of what to expect.

If you have children at home and want to own a cat or dog, be mindful of the age and energy the pet has, as well as your own children. Big or young animals that are high energy could be overbearing to young children, and on the other hand, an animal too old could be too mellow to entertain your children and vice versa. Be careful when introducing a new pet to your children, as well as to other household pets. Often times, older animals adapt best to young (but not too young) additions.

Lastly, keep in mind what function you want your pet to hold. Are you active? Are you rarely available for sit-down lap time? Are you needing an animal helper? Different breeds have different strengths and weaknesses, which are usually passed down through genetics, which is why, for example, some dogs are better herders, diggers, and the like. Creating a good relationship with your pet will make these traits stronger or weaker and, of course, will vary among which animal you have.

After taking all into consideration and deciding that adding a pet to your life is the right decision, consider adopting a pet from a shelter before looking at breeders and other sources.

"These pets, whether surrendered at the ripe old age of 9 after living all of those years with the same family or one who has been neglected and abused, all seem to know that they have been rescued and given a second chance at life – they are resilient and grateful," says Nelson.

Maricopa County is only second behind Los Angeles County for highest animal overpopulation. The Arizona Humane Society puts in an immense amount of energy into making the best experience for both animals waiting to be adopted and those looking to bring a new animal into their lives.

"The Arizona Humane Society's belief is that every pet deserves a great life; therefore, we do everything in our power to see to it that these wonderful animals are given the best chance at life," says Nelson.

They prepare each animal in the shelter with personalized tags regarding their known history, breed, habits, and preferable conditions, making it easy to narrow down the best option for your home and family. They will work with interested families to slowly introduce the pet into their lives, test out conditions, and offer clinics to spay and neuter, for example.

For more information, contact the Arizona Humane Society at <http://www.azhumane.org/>.