



Therapy Dog Orientation

 What is a therapy dog (TD)?


Therapy dogs provide comfort to third parties, not their handlers.

 Where do therapy dogs visit?


Schools, hospitals, assisted living facilities, libraries, airports, college campuses, hospice facilities, funeral homes, physical therapy facilities, courtrooms, mental health clinics

 What are TD activities?

- Petting, brushing, or just looking at the dog.
- With permission, carefully placing small dogs on a person's lap or on the bed.
- Doing simple tricks or obedience routines to entertain and to help people take their minds off their problems.
- Walking alongside the dog and owner, or throwing toys for fetching games.

 What kind of dog makes a good TD?

All dogs can make a good TD if they have the right temperament, training and handler - no matter what breed or age, or what training and certifications the dog got.

 What is required of the handler?

- Dedicating time to volunteering in the community.
- Having an interest in serving others by sharing their dog.
- Enjoying interaction with strangers and the therapy dog.
- Be in control of the dog at all times and following guidelines.
- Have a strong bond with the dog.
- Keeps dog up to date with shots and annual vet exams.





Therapy Dog Training & Certification

What are the steps to get started?



STEP 1: Get your dog a temperament evaluation

TD qualities the temperament tester looks for during an evaluation:

- Dog remains calm around distractions and other dogs and listens to the handler.
- Dog enjoys interaction with people and allows being petted by strangers.
- Dog is at ease around medical equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, walkers) and is calm when visiting people — not too wiggly.

Step 2: Train with your dog to become a unified dog/handler

- Work on obedience (classes or taught at home) with your dog.
- Practice to ignore distractions and to increase tolerance by exposing the dog to a wide variety of different locations and situations (visit local stores, go to the farmers market and other public events that allow non-service dogs, such as ball games or charity events).
- Watching videos and practice tests provided by recognised TD organisations you are interested in can guide you what specifics to look out for during training.
- Taking the Good Citizen Test (CGC) can point out areas of improvement and is a great tool to see if the dog is ready to move on to Step 3.

Step 3: Register and get certified with a TD organization

- Most facilities require that you and your TD are associated with a TD organization.
- Registration proves to the administration of a facility that you and your dog have been tested, background checked and are covered by the organizations liability insurance.
- TD organizations also provide educational material and often arrange group visits or events.



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