



Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

TIPS FOR FAMILIES WHO ARE THINKING ABOUT GETTING A PET

Maricopa County Animal Care and Control (AC&C) offers the following advice to families thinking about adopting.

- ❖ **Include the whole family in the decision making process.** Surprises might be fun but everyone needs to be ready and willing for the responsibility. Allowing children to help pick the new pet will help strengthen the new bond and, you can see how the pet and the child interact.
- ❖ **Only get a pet if all the adults in the family are ready.** Children often coax their parents into getting a pet by saying that they will take care of it. Although children might mean it at the time, in most cases they are not developmentally ready to be the primary caretaker and parents end up with the responsibility.
- ❖ **Do your research.** Pet ownership is a long-term commitment and should not be entered into lightly. Family meetings should include research on animal care, appropriate dog breeds, and an assessment of whether your lifestyle is ready for a pet. If the decision is yes, consider what type of pet or breed will match your lifestyle the best.
- ❖ **Remember what it means to be a responsible pet owner.** Getting a new pet is only the first step in being a pet owner. Consider the costs and time commitment that is required. Remember, being a responsible pet owner includes training your pet, exercising him, taking him to a veterinarian for yearly visits, neutering him, keeping him safe and secure, always having identification on him and spending quality time with him.
- ❖ **Do not get a pet during the holiday season.** The holiday season is an active, somewhat hectic time for most families. Parties, decorations, strange food and visitors create stress on a household and will transfer to the new pet. Consider getting a new pet when you can focus all of your attention on him. AC&C offers gift certificates for any occasion that is redeemable for the entire year.
- ❖ **Consider adopting an adult animal.** Don't let anyone tell that you can't teach old dogs new tricks. Most adult animals already have appropriate manners and are great around kids. It's the young ones that require constant atten-

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs,
contact (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov

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tion, exercise, housebreaking training and are prone to jumping and nipping.

- ❖ **Take your time.** It takes time to find the right match. After your research is done visit the animal shelter many times until the animal of your dreams is available.
- ❖ **Always supervise your children around a pet.** Many children are bitten each year by their own pet because they were either playing too roughly or the child did not know how to read what the dog was trying to tell them. It is a parents responsibility to supervise their child at all times and to teach their child appropriate behaviors around animals.
- ❖ **Be a role model.** Having a pet does not teach a child responsibility, it's the interaction between the pet, the child and the adult that is the real lesson. Spend some quality time with your animal and your child and discuss issues of care and responsibility.
- ❖ **Adopt your new pet from a shelter.** Animal shelters have wonderful animals waiting for families just like you to adopt them into your families. Consider adopting from one of the Animal Care and Control shelters.

AC&C Locations

West Valley Center
2323 S. 35th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85009

East Valley Center
2630 W. 8th St. Mesa

Pet Adoption Center
5231 N. 35th Ave Phoenix

Phone (602) 506-7387

Visit our web site at
www.pets.maricopa.gov

Maricopa County Animal Care & Control (AC&C) is "dedicated to promoting and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of pets and people in Maricopa County."

AC&C is a full service animal care and control agency with shelters, adoptions, enforcement services, licensing and education programs.