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The Requirements For Adopting a Puppy

The requirements for adopting one of our puppies are much the same as for little children. While it is not our intent to discourage potentially good homes for our puppies, we are committed to finding the best possible homes for them. If you are unable to satisfy all of the requirements below and still feel you have the level of experience, leadership and knowledge to successfully raise a German Shepherd Dog (GSD) puppy, please speak with one of our volunteers to discuss your plan for meeting all of a puppy's needs. There are exceptions to everything, but there shouldn't be many when it comes to our puppies!

Puppies need to be raised inside the house to become part of the family, in a home committed to giving them structure, guidance, attention, care, love, and as many different experiences as possible.

Puppies need to meet different people of all ages, sizes, shapes and colors.

Puppies need to be taken as many different places as possible to deal with different sights, sounds, surfaces, levels, stairs, elevators, escalators, noises, crowds and other animals.

Puppies need to have fresh air, sunshine, clouds, wind, rain, mud, dirt, sticks, trees, flowers, grass, weeds, birds, bugs and all manner of living things to experience and explore.

Puppies need to have a yard and another dog to play dog games with, and learn to use their muscles and their minds, and how to coordinate moving their bodies and those big floppy paws and how to stop, turn, twist, run and jump so they'll know where their legs are. **WARNING:** German Shepherds are very noisy when they play! They bite, wrestle, bark, growl, yip, yelp, and sound utterly ferocious!

Puppies need to have their own spot in the house that they can feel safe in and nap in when they're worn out.

Puppies need some time alone without humans to let their brains process all the information they've taken in during the day, and to learn how to just be a dog, preferably with another dog.

Puppies need increasing responsibility for their behavior as they grow, and training to make them good citizens. Puppies, like children, will rise to our highest expectations.

Puppies DON'T need to be crated 8 hours a day, 5 days a week while their owners are at work. Our puppies deserve better than that sort of sterile, immobile environment.

Puppies DON'T need to be left outside all alone all day while their owners are at work. At the very least, they need another dog for company and/or an excellent plan for enrichment and socialization. They are social, pack animals and deserve better than that sort of lonely, terrifying and vulnerable environment.





Puppies DON'T need for their ONLY exercise to be a walk on leash once or twice a day. While they do need to learn to walk politely on leash, they also need to run and play freely with other dog buddies to develop good musculature and coordination for growing bodies.

Puppies DON'T need a home with new human babies who deserve every bit of their parents' attention during the first formative year. Our puppies deserve every bit of that sort of attention, too, and there's just not enough to go around for both of them.

Puppy Owners need to understand that raising a GSD puppy to adulthood will take 3 years, minimum -- yes, 3 years! They need to realize that during this time, the puppy will go through most, if not all, of the same physical, mental and emotional stages of development that a human child goes through from birth to 18 years. Total dependency, teething, potty-training, temper tantrums, disobedience, talking back, rebellion, independence, self-discovery, and defiance, to name just a few.

Puppy Owners need to understand that puppies need more than someone to love them. Puppies need someone who will exercise their brains as well as their bodies, regardless of the weather, their owners' mood, illness or fatigue.

Puppy Owners must be able to set boundaries and use discipline when appropriate, and be willing and able to give appropriate physical corrections if necessary, but without acting in anger. Puppy Owners need to be clear, calm, confident and consistent to give their puppy a secure and trusting social environment to grow in. Puppy Owners must have pack leadership skills, preferably developed with multiple dogs prior to getting a puppy!

Puppy Owners need to be smarter than their puppy! A frustrated owner is often a sign the dog is smarter or more determined than the owner! Puppy Owners must be able to look at each new situation or puppy-raising issue as a challenge. For there will be many such challenges, even for the most experienced of Puppy Owners. And they must solve each new challenge as a calm, assertive, confident leader.

And lastly, Puppy Owners must remember, even at the most frustrating of times, if they want "The Perfect GSD," it's up to them. They need to fully understand and appreciate that Perfect GSDs are not born, they are raised, and this isn't a job for the faint of heart!

We suggest buying a book just on raising puppies, such as:

The Art of Raising a Puppy by the Monks of New Skete

Mother Knows Best by Carol Lea Benjamin

My Smart Puppy by Sarah Wilson

Surviving Your Dog's Adolescence by Carol Lea Benjamin

Dog Training in 10 Minutes by Carol Lea Benjamin

How to Raise the Perfect Dog by Cesar Millan

