

ADOPTING YOUR DOG

Spring is a great time to adopt a dog, as the weather is usually pleasant, not too hot, and not too cold. It is an easier time of the year to teach potty training to a puppy and acclimate older dogs to your environment. Before adopting, research the characteristics of various breeds. Examples include Border Collies are active, herding dogs which require outdoor time, and lots physical activity, Shelties are quite vocal so are probably not suited for an apartment or condo, German Shepherd are independent minded, taking a strong will person to be the leader of their pack. Think about your lifestyle and the best matched characteristics for your family.

Characteristic to seek in all breeds:

- Does the dog happily approach you? A fearful dog is perhaps not well socialize. It will take a lot of work (behavior modification) to help him come out of his shell. Lots of time, energy and regular routine must be committed to these dogs.
- Does the dog play well? He may or may not play with toys, which matters not. Does he follow you and seem happy? Is he playful or extremely serious? Playful dogs are easier to develop bonds and train. Does he get too aroused playing, mouthing you, and jumping on you? Is he willing to calm down when it's time?
- Is he easily aroused? Most pups use their teeth to explore the world, but adolescent and adult dogs should have learned that putting teeth on humans is not acceptable. Avoid dogs who get over-aroused to the point of hard biting, non-stop biting, biting clothes, or snapping and growling.
- Does the dog take treats fairly gently? Can you put the treat right at the end of his nose and slowly move it back over his head. If he jumps up to get it, whisk it out of his sight for a second, then try again. When he sits say "yes" and feed him the treat, then try again. If he starts sitting for your treat after a few repetitions, you have a dog who is a lot easier to train.
- Can you look at his teeth, then carefully hug him? If he resist restraint and becomes aroused, pulling away from you, he probably won't be a warm, cuddly dog. This is important if you have children, they tend to want lots of physical contact with their canine pals. The dog should meet all children in your family and should adore them. Reluctance on the dog's part to engage with the kids should rule him out as an adoption prospect. Dogs should love the kids in the family not just tolerate them, for the sake of the kids and the dog.
- Does he tolerate other dogs? If there are more than one dog in the family, introduce your adoption prospect to the other dogs you currently own before making a final commitment.

Upon adoption of the new member of your family, give Ms C's a call to set up doggy daycare. We enjoy assisting families in making the best dogs even better through the socialization that takes place at daycare.