

# Am I ready to Choose? The right Dog Breed for my Family.

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Picking the right dog breed for you should not be taken lightly. The decision should involve the entire family and take many factors in to account. When it comes to choosing a pup it is always important to research the dog you are looking for. Whether you choose to adopt from an animal shelter, at a breed rescue or from a breeder, the journey cannot begin until the type of dog you are looking for has been decided on.

## Picking the Right Dog Breed

There are many factors that go in to picking the right [dog breed](https://www.caninejournal.com/dog-breed-list/) (<https://www.caninejournal.com/dog-breed-list/> ) for you including: compatibility with children, energy level, working vs. nonworking breeds, size, and grooming care, special needs of the dog etc. Below are some helpful criteria to help you start to narrow down your thoughts around adopting a new dog. Once you have found the right breed for you the search can begin at local shelters, breed rescues and / or breeders.

There are many facts that go in to selecting a breed. Some families go in to selecting a dog knowing that they want a working dog that can perform search and rescue with a designated handler in the family. Some families go in selecting a breed that sheds less than other breeds. Some families go in selecting a breed that has lower energy levels.

## Dog Breed Selection Checklist

Of all of the options in selecting a dog there are a few things that seem more popular among families that are choosing their dogs:

- age
- coat length
- shedding
- activity level
- size
- family-oriented nature
- trainability / intelligence

### A Dog's Age

When selecting a dog the **dog's age** plays a large part in determining the right dog for you. If there are young toddlers in the house you may be better suited to a grown dog that will not teethe on your younger children and their toys. Another plus in picking a grown dog is that the breed specific rescues and breeders with full grown dogs will be able to tell you how well the dog interacts with children.

On that note some families do choose to pick a new puppy that can grow up with their child and with obedience classes this arrangement can work just as well as adopting a fully grown dog. Age is also a factor in the **energy level** of the dog you select. If you are looking for a running companion, selecting a senior dog is not the right option for you. If, however, you are looking for a more sedate dog then a senior dog may be the right choice for you.

### Coat Length and Shedding

Another important factor in selecting a new dog for your family is **coat length**. Some family members may be particularly sensitive to certain varieties of fur. While there is certainly no such thing as a hypoallergenic dog (the allergen is in the saliva not the fur), some **allergies** are prompted by long haired dogs. There are also dogs who shed considerably less than others such as Poodles. Due to the nature of a Poodle's hair it sheds a lot more than a Collie might. Hair shedding is not always a matter of allergies either; it can be a matter of housekeeping. If you are looking for a dog that won't leave you running around with a vacuum twice a day there are short haired dogs that shed less than certain long haired dogs. As a general rule of thumb dogs with longer coats shed more than dogs with shorter coats and dogs with wire hair shed less than dogs with silky coats.

### Activity Level

A particularly important factor for families when they are picking their dog is **activity level**. Families who live in an apartment are not well suited to dogs with particularly high energy levels although this can be remedied if you are a runner and are dedicated to giving your dog an adequate routine of exercise. Many families start with this intention and wind up dropping the

ball. A high energy dog without any outlet for that energy is going to turn in to a destructive dog who is just plain bored.

Some families set their heart on a specific breed of dog and cannot be swayed, if this is the case yet the family is unable to provide adequate exercise for a young dog it is worth considering an older dog of the desired breed.

### Working Dog Breeds = High Energy

In general **working dog breeds** are dogs that have high energy levels, working dog breeds are listed on the AKC/UKC website along with other categories of dog including: sporting, hound, and terrier, toy, non-sporting, herding, and miscellaneous.

### Dog Size

One of the most basic factors in selecting a dog is the **size of the dog**, size includes both **height** and **weight**. Families living in a small apartment should consider getting a smaller breed of dog. Families with particularly small children should also be particularly careful when selecting a giant breed of dog, while breeds like **Mastiffs** can be graceful and gentle with children they also do not realize the sheer enormity of their size and can easily knock down small children.

Likewise small breeds that are notorious for herding or rapping can nip at children's heels in an attempt to corral children like sheep – this trait can be trained out of individual dogs though so it should not be a singular reason for writing off a breed. When selecting a mixed breed puppy from a shelter it can never be certain what size your fully grown dog will be, however, in general shelter officials can help you determine the approximate size of your fully grown dog by guessing the dogs mixed breeds.

### Family-Oriented Nature

An important factor when selecting a dog for a household with children or a household with the intention to add children is the **family oriented nature** of the dog. Some dogs are naturally good with children, such dogs include **Labrador Retrievers**. Some dogs are not as good with children such as **Alaskan Malamutes** who are more intended for outdoor work dogs. This is not to say that all Alaskan Malamutes will not be good with children nor is it to say that all Labradors are great with children but in general some breeds of dog mesh well with a family that contains young children and some do not. Here is a helpful article on the [best guard dogs for families](#) to help you make the right choice for you.

## [Top 10 Guard Dogs for Families](#) (Not in any particular order)

### 1. German Shepherd

2. Rottweiler
3. Bullmastiff
4. Doberman Pinscher (Large)
5. Belgian Shepherd (Malinois)
6. Boxer
7. American Bulldog
8. African Mastiff -Boerboel
9. Great Pyrenees
10. Cane Corso

### Trainability and Intelligence

Another important thing to consider in choosing your pet is how smart they are in addition to how easily they can be trained. If you are looking for a dog to go on walks with you, you will need it to heel. If you are looking for a dog to catch a Frisbee, you will need to know it is smart enough to be trained to do so. The examples go on and on. So, the smarter the dog, often the more trainable it is. But, there are some dogs that are almost too smart for their own good which can make them stubborn and difficult to train. You may want to review our list of the [smartest dog breeds](#) to see how one of these intelligent pups might fit into your world.

### Top 10 Smartest Dog Breeds

1. Border Collie
2. Poodle (Large)
3. German Shepherd/Belgian Shepherd (Malinois)
4. Golden Retriever
5. Doberman Pinscher
6. Shetland Sheepdog
7. Labrador Retriever
8. Papillion
9. Rottweiler
10. Australian Cattle Dog

### Dog Breed Selection Interactive Tool

We recently discovered this [interactive breed selection tool](https://www.mydogname.com/dog-breed-selector) (<https://www.mydogname.com/dog-breed-selector> ) that may help you narrow down your best dog type so you can be more informed as you head into the exciting phase of meeting new dogs!

## Visit Your Local Animal Shelter

Many people choose to frequent the **local animal shelter** and pick out a dog that they fall in love with, this is a perfect way to incorporate the whole family in to picking out your puppy. One thing you should keep in mind when picking out your puppy from the animal shelter is the type of dog or mixed breed you are looking for.

### Ask Questions, Take Your Pick, and Save a Dog

Are you looking for a dog that has a short coat? Are you looking for a particular breed mix? Are you looking for a long haired dog? Are you looking for a dog that has a high prey drive? Are you looking for a dog for a specific purpose i.e.: search and rescue work? Are you looking for an older or younger dog? After really planning what you are looking for you can begin frequenting your local shelter and working with the staff there to let them know exactly what you are looking for in your future dog. The great thing about choosing your dog from an animal shelter is that your new dog will leave room for one more homeless dog in the shelter when you bring your dog home. Another plus to selecting your dog from a shelter is that you have free range over the age of your dog; you do not have to select a puppy.

## Selecting a Dog from a Breeder

Some people who know for sure what breed of dog they are looking for go straight to a **breeder**. It is important to research many breeders and **ask as many questions as possible when shopping for a purebred dog**. There are many websites online that offer lists of questions that you should ask of your potential breeder. It is always important, when shopping with a breeder that you look over the **certifications of the dog's lineage**, this is important for the health of your dog. When you are preparing to pay a large amount of money for a dog or a new puppy it is important that you ensure the health of your new dog by checking over **all required certifications**. You should also ask about the **health of both parents of your new dog** to make sure that there are no major health problems in the lineage of your dog. ([Ask to see the parents of your puppy](#))

**A good breeder will be more than happy to offer you information on the health of your dog's ancestors.** A breeder will also give you more direction as far as picking the right dog for your needs. Knowing just what you are looking for in your new dog the breeder will be able to assess new puppies in terms of their dominance, their shyness and their overall personalities. These factors are much easier for a breeder to determine as they watch their puppies develop over the first few months of their life. **When purchasing a dog from a breeder you should also make sure that you read the contract that your breeder gives you to sign prior to completion of the**

purchase. Most often a **breeder's contract** will stipulate that your dog must be spayed or neutered and that if you ever find yourself needing to give up your dog it must be returned back to the breeder. In general purchasing a dog from a breeder is **more costly** and comes with more stipulations than the other two dog selection alternatives.

## Take Your Time, Choosing a Dog is a Long Term Decision

Choosing the right dog and its breed for you and your family can take a lot of work and a lot of planning ahead and ideally it should do because the decision to bring a dog home is a decision that can last as long as **sixteen years**. Picking your dog based on traits and breeds is a great way to get started in picking your new family member but much like people, dogs are individuals. Each dog has its own personality traits and likes and dislikes and ideally picking out your dog should involve multiple visitations with your dog before bringing it home. Most shelters and rescues as well as breeders require that potential families visit their new dog at least twice prior to bringing it home so that you are aware of the dog that you are getting. The biggest factor in bringing home your new dog and creating a happy and healthy home is patience. Make sure to take your time and do your research and you will be well on the way to picking the right dog for you and your family.

## Favourite breed of Canines Worldwide. (Not in any particular order)

1. Belgian Shepherd (Malinois)
2. German Shepherd
3. Siberian Husky / Alaskan malamute
4. Yorkshire Terrier all Varieties / Pomeranian
5. Shih Tzu / Chihuahua / Pug
6. Golden Retriever/Labrador
7. American Pit-bull / Boerboel
8. American Bulldog
9. Irish Wolf Hound / All other hounds
10. English bulldog / French bulldog