

Do You Know... What a Puppy is Not?

by Velma Hiser

A puppy is not a toy. A puppy is a living being who has a need for love and proper care for the rest of his life-- not just sufficient rest. He or she needs to be fed often when young. And a young puppy is especially vulnerable to broken bones and other injuries from careless treatment.

A puppy is not a teaching aid. A puppy should not be obtained to instill a sense of responsibility in children. It is unfair to place an animal's entire well-being in the hands of children. Feeding, grooming, housekeeping and discipline training of an animal should be the principal responsibilities of adults. Responsibility training of children is better left for household tasks, where a helpless animal's needs are not at stake.

A puppy is not cheap. The purchase price or adoption fee for a pet is a mere pittance compared to the cost of veterinary care for routine and emergency treatment over the dog's lifetime, as well as licensing fees and damages to personal property which are bound to occur.

A puppy is not a spur-of-the-moment commitment. Animal shelters are overrun with dogs who were acquired for the wrong reasons or without sufficient investigation and personal commitment.

A puppy is not self-cleaning. Dogs can neither groom themselves nor clean up after themselves (accidents, shedding), and therefore can impose an additional workload in a household.

A puppy is not an adult dog. Having neither the physical nor mental abilities of an adult dog, a puppy cannot wait long periods of time before relieving himself, nor differentiate between what is a toy and what is not; nor can he or she distinguish between digestible and dangerous objects. Puppies require patience, understanding, and supervision, just as with human infants and young children. A puppy doesn't mature into an adult for at least two years. If you work and don't have the time for training and play, get an older dog.

A puppy is not forever. But they need your love and care forever. Be sure you understand the lifelong commitment involved in succumbing to the charms of a cute, cuddly little puppy.