**The Positive Effects on Children of Owning a Dog**



Brendan's best friend is Tip. Tip and Brendan are inseparable. They teach each other things and they look after each other. Tip has helped Brendan become more responsible, more caring, and a better friend. Brendan is a nine-year-old boy, and Tip is a ten-year-old dog. Brendan and Tip are an example of how owning a dog can have a positive effect on a child's development. Having a dog develops a child's sense of responsibility, broadens his capacity for empathy, and teaches the nature of friendship.

Having a dog helps a child learn how to act responsibly. As a dog owner, the child must take care of the animal's daily needs. The dog must be fed and exercised every day. A dog is completely dependent on its owner for all its needs, including the need for good health and a safe environment. Therefore, being responsible for a dog also means taking care of the dog so that it stays healthy. Furthermore, the owner must take responsibility for the safety of the dog and the safety of the people it comes into contact with. If the child forgets any of these duties and responsibilities, or ignores any of the dog's needs, the dog will suffer. This teaches the child that his responsibility to the dog is more important than his desire to play with his toys, talk on the phone, or watch TV. This is true not only for the care of a dog, but also for the care of oneself, another person, or one's job. Learning how to take responsibility for the health and welfare of a dog leads to learning how to take responsibility for oneself.

Another lesson that a child can learn from having a dog is how to be empathetic. Empathy is the ability to put oneself in another person's, or in this case another creature's, situation and imagine that person's or creature's feelings or problems. A dog cannot express itself with speech, so its owner must learn how to interpret its behaviour. The child must learn to understand what the dog's behaviour means. Is the dog frightened, aggressive, or sick? The child needs to understand what is going on in the dog's mind. Understanding a situation from the dog's perspective helps the child understand why the dog is behaving in a certain way and what the dog needs. The result of learning to read a dog's behaviour is that the child develops empathy. By learning how to empathize with a dog, the child also learns how to empathize with other people. This leads to the child becoming a more considerate and caring person.

Being considerate and caring are important characteristics in a good friend. One of the most significant benefits of owning a dog is the example of true friendship that a dog provides. A dog gives unconditional love to its owner. A dog will not stop loving its owner because of a little anger, indifference, or neglect. The dog will wait patiently for its owner to pat its head and say a few kind words. This acceptance of the negative qualities and appreciation for the positive qualities of its owner provide a wonderful model of how to be a good friend. A child soon realizes that his dog will always listen to him, will always be ready to play with him, will always protect him, and will always forgive him. A child who has learned to be even half as good a friend to others as his dog is to him will have learned one of the most valuable lessons in life.

These are some of the most important lessons a child will ever learn. The benefits of owning a dog will last the child's entire lifetime. The understanding and appreciation of responsibility, empathy, and friendship that a child develops from the experience of having a dog will help him or her grow into a reliable, caring, and mature adult.

1. The dog's name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 A. Tip

 B. Brendan

 C. Brennan

 D. Kip

2. Which of the following have a positive effect on a child's development?

 A. feeling responsible

 B. feeling empathy

 C. building friendships

 D. all of the above

3. A child learns how to be responsible for a dog by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 A. taking care of the dog's daily needs

 B. taking away a safe environment

 C. feeding the dog weekly

 D. becoming dependent on the dog

4. Learning how to care for a dog can help children \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 A. to take of themselves

 B. to choose the dog over playing

 C. to get welfare

 D. to ignore the dog's needs

5. Children can learn how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 A. understand the dog's needs

 B. only care about themselves, and not others

 C. get rid of the dog they don't want to take care of it

 D. be irresponsible

6. The dog's owner must interpret which of the following from their dog's behaviour?

 A. fear

 B. happiness

 C. illness

 D. all of the above

7. Which of the following is a positive result of learning how to interpret a dog's behaviour?

 A. becoming selfish

 B. becoming empathetic

 C. becoming arrogant

 D. being thoughtless

8. What kind of love does a dog provide?

 A. shallow

 B. one-sided

 C . conditional

 D. unconditional

9. Which of the following is NOT a benefit of a child owning a dog?

 A. companionship

 B. reliability

 C. friendship

 D. neglect

10. In what ways is a dog loyal?

A. It is able to tolerate the negative qualities of humans.

B. It will protect people.

C. It neglects its owner.

D. It offers unconditional love.