

## **Growing Up With Pets Fact File: *Children and Pets***

Older children are capable of managing more pet care responsibilities than toddlers or infants, but they should not be relied on to be the pet's primary caretaker. Though children might promise to walk Fido every day, parents shouldn't rely on young children for daily pet maintenance.

### **Preschoolers**

- Supervise children so they “play nicely” with pets.
- Teach children and pets cues, such as “nice” and “easy,” so both understand appropriate play.
- Do not expect young children to take on care responsibilities.

### **Grade-schoolers**

- Involve children in pet training.
- Enroll children in a program, such as 4-H, where they learn how to care for pets.
- Monitor play time when noise levels increase and rowdy behavior can occur. Pets react to these environmental changes.

### **Teens**

- Busy schedules often prevent teens from helping with pet care.

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