

CREATURE COMFORT EVALUATION TO QUALIFY FOR PET THERAPY CERTIFICATION

This evaluation takes the team – both the animal AND the human – into consideration when evaluating for appropriate behavior and aptitude for pet therapy visits.

Traits we're looking for in our therapy teams:

Humans:

Friendly personality
Interested in people
Advocate for the pet
Able to control pet
Relaxed and confident
Good working relationship with pet

Pets:

Friendly and gentle behavior
Interested in people
Reliably well-behaved
Predictable reactions appropriate to situation
Relaxed and confident
Attentive relationship with owner

Regulations and Requirements:

- All teams must be re-evaluated every two years.
- Handlers 12 - 17 years of age can test as a junior volunteer, however, an adult who is also certified with the animal must supervise them at all times on visits.
- If equipment, such as stroller, gentle leader or harness is used for the testing, it must also be used for visiting.

The following are acceptable / required during testing:

- Encouragement and reassurance – talking your pet through each situation
- Hand signals; verbal commands
- 4-6' leash (no retractable or flexi-leads permitted in testing or on visits)
- Gentle leaders
- Harnesses that either clip at the chest or back
- Collars – martingale or buckle

The following are NOT acceptable / allowed during testing:

- Training aids
- Prong or choke collars
- Jerking or pulling on leash
- Harsh words/tone or rough treatment
- Treats
- Manipulating the dog into position (such as pushing down on their backside to sit)

The following behaviors will immediately stop the test: urination or defecation in testing room; excessive barking; any sign of aggressive behavior.

Owner's Name _____ Animal's Name/Age _____

Date of Test _____ Animal's Breed _____

Loose Leash Walking

Handler will be asked to walk their dog around the room with the dog controlled at their side. Evaluator will ask the team to make left and right turns and to come to a stop.

Points	Description
2	Handler is able to control dog on leash. Dog is attentive to movement of handler.
1	Handler has occasional tight leash, but mostly under control.
0	Dog is pulling handler around the room

Evaluator Note _____

Accepting a Friendly Stranger (small dogs may be picked up)

Evaluator and team walk towards each other, meet in the middle. Handler puts pet in sit/down/stand stay. Evaluator introduces himself, walks around team and asks to pet the dog. Evaluator pets the dog and then walks away. Pet should remain by side of handler. During petting dog should not show any aggression, fear, skittishness or jumping.

Points	Description
2	Dog stays in position through all test areas. Is calm and friendly.
1	Dog breaks stay but is calm and friendly.
0	Dog approaches evaluator in an inappropriate way, mouths the evaluator, acts nervous or avoids interaction with evaluator.

Evaluator Note _____

Pet Temperament (any pet that receives a 0 in this category will not move on)

Handler can be next to pet and speak encouragingly to them during this exercise. Evaluator is assessing the pet's comfort in being handled by a stranger. Evaluator will **brush** pet. Evaluator will then proceed to **inspect the pet** including looking in ears, teeth and touching all over the body including feet/tail. Evaluator will then **restrain dog in a hug** for approximately 10 seconds. Handler may bring own brush.

Points	Description
4	Dog shows no sign of fear or aggression, is comfortable with all evaluator handling.
3	Dog tolerates all handling but may be uncomfortable at times.
2	Dog avoids some of the handling.
1	Dog avoids most handling.
0	Dog acts aggressively, mouths the evaluator or cannot be handled at all.

Evaluator Note _____

Basic Training

Handler will be asked to demonstrate that the dog is able to perform basic commands.

- 1. Sit** - The evaluator asks the handler to have their dog sit.
- 2. Down** - The evaluator asks the handler have their dog go into a down position.
- 3. Stay** - The evaluator removes dog's leash and attaches a twenty-foot leash. The handler is asked to place the dog in a sit or down stay, walk to the end of the leash and return immediately, keeping dog in a stay.
- 4. Come** - The handler walks to the end of the leash again, keeping the dog in a stay position (sit or down) and calls the dog. Dog must go directly to the handler.

Points	Description
3	Dog performs all four of the above commands perfectly.
2	Dog can perform three of the above commands.
1	Dog can perform two of the above commands.
0	Dog performs only one or none of the above commands.

Evaluator Note _____

Leave it

Evaluator will place 3 or 4 treats on the floor in a line while the dog watches. Handler will be asked to walk in a circle by the treats with the dog on the inside, instructing their dog to 'leave it' (or whatever command handler uses).

Points	Description
2	Dog may be interested but willingly goes with handler.
1	Dog pulls at times towards treat but overall goes with handler.
0	Dog pulls mightily towards treat; dog eats the treat or refuses to walk away from the treat.

Evaluator Note _____

Simulating Visiting (dog cannot put paws on equipment or person)

Evaluator will be assessing how the dog reacts to unfamiliar objects as well as the dog and handler for appropriate visiting behavior.

The team and a person sitting in a wheelchair will approach each other from opposite sides of the room. Handler will introduce him/herself and encourage their pet to visit. A person using a walker will approach the team and lean over to pet the dog.

Points	Description
7	Dog is interactive, comfortable and acts appropriately.
5	Dog is comfortable with interaction but hesitant of equipment.
3	Dog is not very interested in interacting or is distracted.
1	Dog is uncomfortable with the interaction.
0	Dog is avoiding interaction, acts inappropriately or mouths the person.

Evaluator Note _____

Visiting with Food Distraction

Dog will be assessed on visiting with a food distraction present. The dog should ignore the food and visit appropriately with the person.

Points	Description
1	Dog is able to visit appropriately.
0	Dog is more interested in the food than visiting with the person.

Evaluator Note _____

Meeting a Neutral Dog

The team will approach another handler/dog team from a distance of about 15 feet. Handler will be instructed to put their dog into a sit, down or stand stay by their side before they greet the evaluator. Once both dogs are quiet by their sides, handler and evaluator will greet and shake hands and turn to walk away together. Any sign of aggression is an immediate failure.

Points	Description
2	Dog is under control at handler's side.
1	Dog pulls towards the other dog but is friendly.
0	Dog acts inappropriately.

Evaluator Note _____

Simulating Visiting with Another Dog

Evaluator will be assessing how the dog handles visiting with another dog in the room. The neutral dog may just walk around or may visit with people in the room.

Points	Description
2	Dog is able to focus mainly on visiting.
1	Dog is distracted at times but can interact some with people.
0	Dog is highly distracted and cannot focus on anything else but the dog.

Evaluator Note _____

Negotiating Noisy Crowd

Evaluator is assessing if dog is comfortable in a crowded noisy room. The team will walk through a group of people who are talking loudly and after someone will drop something, making a loud noise. Also, someone will reach out to pet the dog.

Points	Description
1	Dog willingly walks through crowd.
0	Dog tries to avoid the crowd or reacts inappropriately.

Evaluator Note _____

Enthusiastic Group Petting (small dogs may be passed lap to lap and visit on the floor)
 A group of people will gather around the dog and excitedly pet the dog. Evaluators will be assessing how dogs react to being surrounded by people.

Points	Description
4	Dog clearly enjoys the attention. Dog is outgoing and friendly.
2	Dog is compliant, but appears to be putting up with it rather than loving it.
0	Dog is avoiding interaction, acts inappropriately or nervous.

Evaluator Note _____

Taking a Treat Gently (handler may bring their own treat)
 Evaluator gets permission from handler to give dog a treat. Evaluator hands treat between thumb and 1st finger. Evaluator is assessing how gently the dog takes the treat.

Points	Description
2	Dog takes treat gently or does not take treat at all.
1	Teeth are felt but dog is overall gentle.
0	Dog would take fingers to get to the treat.

Evaluator Note _____

Maximum Points on Evaluation - 32
Total Score Needed to Pass - 24 (75%)

Total Score _____ Evaluator _____

If did not pass, is animal able to retest? Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

