



Your First Dog! A Children's Book About Owning & Caring For Dogs

Brian G. Johnson

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Dog owner Brian G. Johnson share's the joy's of owning and caring for a dog, starring Otis Johnson the standard poodle. Kids will be charmed by the photos of dogs in this book which parents will also appreciate. For children, much of the joy of having a dog is that dogs always want to play. They rarely tire of chasing balls or Frisbees, and they might even pitch in to help a kid fly a kite. There is little that is that is of interest to children that dogs won't want to do with them.

Children will be amused by the illustrations, but the text will also inform them about the needs of dogs. For parents, adding a dog to the family can be exhausting if the children are not prepared to share in the responsibility. This book is intended to teach children how to do that.

Children recognize that dogs are natural playmates that delight in shared activities, but they may not realize that having a dog means taking on some jobs. For kids, this book uses great photos to show many of the joys of playing with, training, and loving a dog. Kids will laugh at and adore the illustrations of rambling dogs and children, but the text will teach them how having a dog is a responsibility.

Providing exercise by walking or running with the dog, cleaning up after it, feeding and providing water, and brushing and grooming are among the duties that are discussed and illustrated. Appropriate training by never hitting or hurting the animal is emphasized.

Children are helped to understand that dogs learn by having consequences happen quickly in relationship to the dog's behavior. They are encouraged to pay attention to the desired canine behavior rather than to the misbehavior. Focusing on the positive and providing praise and small, appropriate food rewards are the training techniques that are put forward as appropriate for children to use.

Once a family decides it is ready for a dog, the selection of one is a major decision. Expert advice as to the suitability of specific breeds is provided along with photos of each kind. Temperament, size, and trainability are the major considerations in the recommendations so that the family can avoid the disappointment and frustration of getting a dog whose needs the family cannot meet.

For parents, this book is a guide to preparing their children for dog ownership. It discusses the value of having a dog in teaching children compassion, empathy, and responsibility. Criteria are provided to help parents to judge when the child is ready for a dog.

If parents realize their children are not yet ready to have a dog, ideas are presented for motivating the kids to change their behaviors. The emphasis is on learning to follow through on tasks without requiring constant, repetitive reminders, being able to restrain impulses so as not to lash out at others when frustrated, maintaining order by putting belongings away, and, in general, having a more cooperative attitude at home.

Whether kids read this book independently or with a parent, it should stimulate meaningful conversation about readiness for dog ownership and the kinds of duties that having a dog would impose.

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