



THE ALLIE PROJECT

Promoting the Educational Benefits of Therapy Dogs in Schools

HELPFUL INFORMATION

INFORMATION ON SCHOOL THERAPY DOGS (AAT AND AAA)

(compiled from deltasociety.org)

1. Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) is formal, involving direction by health/human services professionals as a normal part of their practice. It is goal-directed, meaning that a specific objective is planned before the animal is introduced or used. AAT is documented by the professional working with the client.
2. Animal-Assisted Activity (AAA) is informal but may involve aspects of AAT.

Benefits of AAT/AAA can include the following:

- Empathy (*identifying with and understanding the feelings/motives of others*)
- Outward Focus (*bringing individuals out of themselves*)
- Nurturing (*promoting growth and development of another living thing*)
- Rapport (*relationship of mutual trust or a feeling of connection or bonding*)
- Acceptance (*favorable reception or approval*)
- Entertainment
- Socialization (*seeking out or enjoying company of others*)
- Mental Stimulation
- Physical Contact/Touch
- Physiological Benefits (*positive effects on basic bodily functions*)
- Spirituality/"Something More"

Concerns about AAT/AAA:

- When the animal is a source of rivalry/competition within a group
- When someone becomes "possessive" of the animal
- Provocation of the animal on purpose or by accident (*clients with brain injuries, developmental disabilities, senility, etc.*)
- Unrealistic clients thinking the animal is rejecting them



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- Severe allergic reactions (*Generally, by finding out up front about allergies, problem situations and interactions can be avoided.*)
- Zoonotic diseases (*passed between people and animals*) can be controlled by diligent hand-washing and sanitation.
- People with Open wounds or low resistance to disease must be carefully monitored and/or restricted.
- Fear of animals
- Cultural views of animals and their place/use in society
- Cost factors (*who pays for food, general daily care, veterinary care, liability*)
- When it appears that the animal does not enjoy its job or is fearful in certain situations