

# PUPPY POWER!

## How to Welcome Your New Bundle of Energy

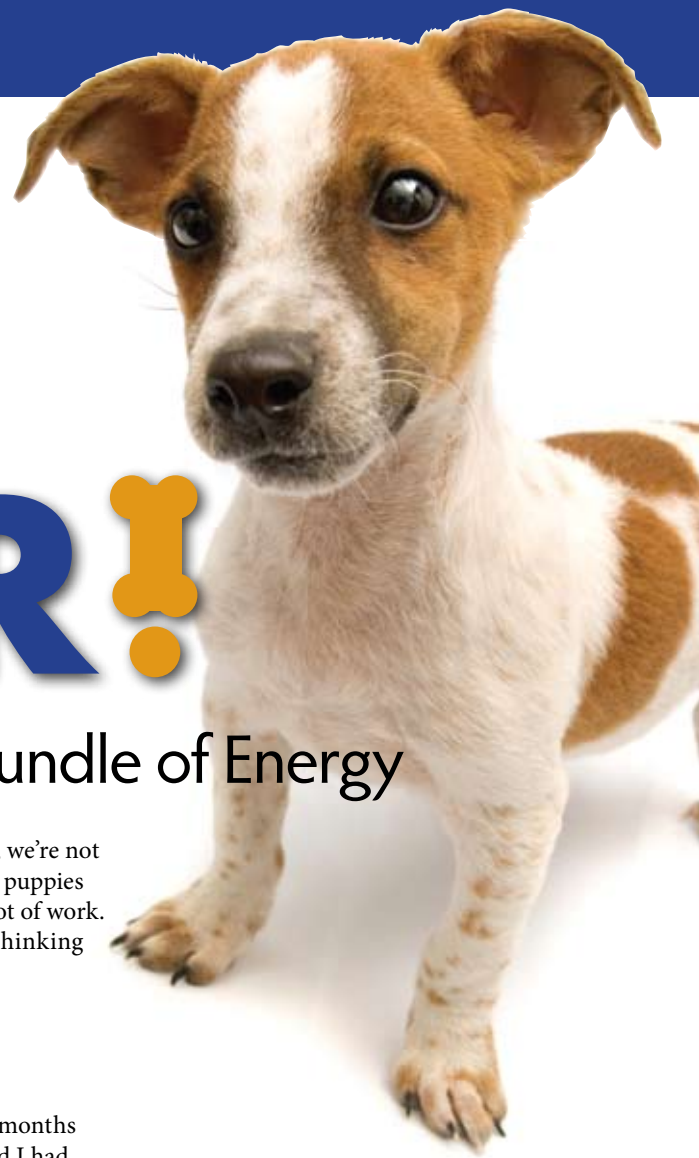
**D**id a new member join your family over the holiday season? No, we're not talking about a new baby, but a member of the furry kind! New puppies can bring lots of fun and joy to a family but they can also be a lot of work. So whether you're still getting used to each other or just in the thinking stages there are lots of things to consider.

### A DOG FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Kelly Hanse and her family got their Golden Retriever puppy, Cici, about 6 months ago. "We had been discussing getting a dog for a long time. Both my son and I had done extensive research into getting a dog before we ever got the puppy," she says. Consider the breed and temperament, size, exercise needed and the time you can devote to your new dog. "We have an eleven-, nine- and three-year-old. The two older ones take care of feeding, grooming, backyard cleanup, and walking her and all three play with her," says Hanse.



Caroline and Kodah have snuggle time.



*“...Dogs teach children a great deal about responsibility and unconditional love”*



Mary Margaret with dog Rocco



Amanda and Ryan having fun with Cici

## PRECIOUS BUNDLES WITH A POWERFUL PUNCH

Welcoming a puppy into the family can sometimes be an even greater transition than a new baby. Puppies require regular, sometimes constant, supervision to prevent dangerous emergencies or destruction of property. The Hanan family discovered this when their 7-month-old Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Kodah, “devoured his three-foot by four-foot, \$80 bed! When my husband found him all he had left was a few foam crumbs clung to his face!” says Cindy Hanan. “He’s a puppy and is hyper and just wants to be loved and played with. He means well and is so absolutely adorable. He’s just a dog who cannot distinguish between his toys and my daughters’ American Girl dolls or Webkinz animals” says Hansé.

## A VISIT TO THE VET

Within a few days of bringing your new puppy home, schedule a visit to the veterinarian. Dr. Harvey Brannen of VCA Southwest Animal Hospital says, “Your vet can help you determine health status, take measures for parasite control and prevention, set

up a schedule of vaccinations and just get acquainted with the veterinary staff.” While the initial expense may seem like a lot, vaccines and check-ups can help prevent many diseases that may end up costing much more for treatments later.

Your vet can also advise you on potty-training and crate-training methods. Brannen says most veterinarians and breeders recommend crate training as “this will allow the pup to have a ‘den’ or place of his or her own for familiarity, security, some good old ‘down time’ for the pup and the family, and it’s the easiest and best ‘potty training’ aide for the pup and family.”

Still thinking about it? “My advice is to research, study, inquire, visit, talk with your family, talk with your veterinarian, decide how much time, energy, patience, space, and money you have to devote to this new family member and be prepared for a major undertaking,” says Brannen.

## COME! SIT! STAY!

After a dog chews up something valuable, bites, plays too rough, jumps or barks at everything, most new dog owners will look to training their new pet to help with obedience or behavioral training. Doing a little research online or at the library will give you an idea of the many options. There are group lessons at large chain pet stores, private lessons at trainer facilities or private trainers who will come to your home and train your dog. One is sure to fit your schedule and budget.

Pat Conn, a dog behavioral therapist and trainer with BarkBusters comes to your home to teach you and the dog training techniques.

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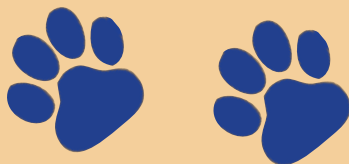
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## Things to consider before you get your new puppy

**CHECK YOUR SCHEDULE.** Will you be able to provide adequate exercise and attention to your dog? Don't adopt a puppy or dog if you won't have time for it later. Animals are not disposable.

**SIZE OF YOUR HOME.** A large breed such as a Golden Retriever would probably be happier in a home with a yard than in a small apartment.

**EXPANDING YOUR FAMILY.** If you have young children, be sure to do the research on what breeds are best for families with children (don't forget mixed breeds too!). The American Kennel Club website is a great place to start your research.



"Bark Busters' philosophy is very unique in that we actually train the owners how to be a leader in a way that their dog can recognize them as a good strong leader and how to communicate so that they can correct, educate, and warn their dog in a way that the dog will understand," says Conn. "Bark Busters training is not treat-based and there is no physical harm to the dog. We train the owners how to have voice control of the dog," he says.

When deciding on what method is right for you, consider this says Conn, "Are you training your dog or is the dog trainer? Just because a dog trainer trains your dog doesn't mean your dog will mind you. Our method trains you and your dog," he says.

### HAPPY ENDINGS

With the responsibilities come many joys to having a new dog in the family. "When you get a puppy or a dog, make sure that everyone in the family is onboard with getting it because the puppy affects everyone. Dogs teach children a great deal about responsibility and unconditional love. They are wonderful additions to any family," says Hanse.

*BRENDA THOMPSON is a freelance writer, volunteer, mother of two living in Sugar Land. She is also a dog lover.*

## Don't Forget to Spay/Neuter!



The Houston area has one of the highest cat and dog euthanize rates (estimated at 80,000 deaths per year.) Experts say one of the first things new pet owners should do is spay/neuter their pets to help prevent future pet euthanizations and overpopulation.



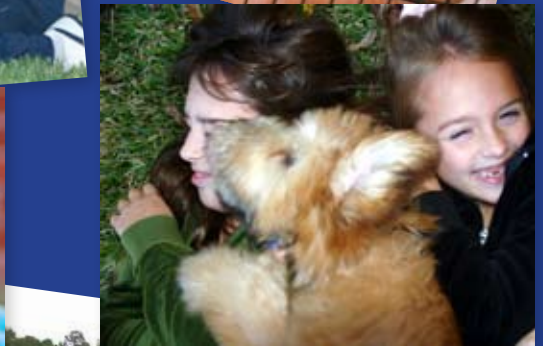
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# Puppy Love

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## SEND YOUR PHOTOS!

We're now collecting photos of kids for Spring, kids doing sports, brides and grooms photos and newborn baby pictures.

Email jpegs to [editor@sugarlandmagazine.com](mailto:editor@sugarlandmagazine.com).