

Choosing a Daycare for Your Dog

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safetyboardingpet sitter

If you're a dog owner who works long hours or has an unpredictable schedule, leaving your dog home alone for long stretches can be challenging for both you and your dog. In fact, "A dog that must endure long days (six or more hours) without appropriate exercise can suffer quite a bit of stress," says Aida Muñoz, a dog walker and pet sitter for Precious Paws Pet Sitting LLC in Royal Oak, Michigan.

While some owners opt for [hiring a dog walker](#), others will find that dog daycare is the best choice for their dog. If your dog is well-socialized, enjoys the company of other dogs, and will benefit from frequent exercise, playtime, and lots of stimulation, a daycare environment may be a good option.

Is Doggy Daycare Right for Your Dog?

Every dog's needs are different and you're in the best position to decide if this environment is right for your dog.

Here are some of the benefits of doggy daycare:

- A chance to meet and play with other dogs
- Mental stimulation
- A routine that relieves separation anxiety and boredom
- Exercise — a tired out pup will be relaxed and exhausted by the time he comes home
- Lots of TLC
- Avoids the issue of having strangers in your home

Choosing the Right Daycare Facility For Your Dog

Once you've narrowed down the options in your area, it's important to visit (without your dog) and simply observe. Examine the facility, watch how the staff interacts with the dogs in their care, and get the 'vibe' of the place. According to the Professional Animal Care Certification Council (PACCC), here are some things to look for:

- Is it clean and organized?
- Does it have secure fencing?
- Is the area free of hazards, like electrical cords, wires or broken toys?
- Does it have minimal odors and a comfortable temperature?
- Is there enough for staff to ensure safety?

Questions to Ask Before Choosing a Doggy Daycare

So far, so good? Then it's time to ask some important questions. Don't be shy; this is your dog's care you're deciding on and a reputable daycare center will be happy to answer your questions.

1. Will they do a temperament test? The daycare facility should do an assessment of your dog's behavior and personality before accepting him. Some facilities do a comprehensive behavioral assessment, not only to

- decide if a dog is right for their environment but also to customize care.
2. What kind of training does the staff have? At a bare minimum, the staff should be trained in basic care and safety procedures. However, ideally, you're looking for staff trained in animal behavior, including canine body language, and warning signs of danger, stress, or illness.
 3. Does the facility have procedures in place for emergencies, like [natural disasters](#) or injuries? There should be staff members trained in canine first aid. Ask how they will communicate with you in the event of an emergency.
 4. Will you receive daily or weekly reports from them? Will you have access to a webcam? Will they notify you promptly if they see a change in behavior or well-being?
 5. What type of corrections do they use, if any? According to PACCC, professionally trained staff will use methods that do not use punishment for bad behavior and do reward good behavior.
 6. Is there a variety of activities to appeal to dogs of different energy levels and personalities? Is there a comfortable, designated rest area? Will your dog be crated at any point, and for how long?
 7. Is the business bonded and insured?

If they're open and responsive and seem like compassionate, warm, and patient caregivers, you can feel more confident that they'll take good care of your dog.

Does Your Dog Like Doggy Daycare?

Once your dog has settled into the routine, you'll be able to tell whether he's enjoying daycare. The best sign is a dog that comes home tired, but happy. Is he relaxed or stressed at the end of the day? Does he seem eager to head out each morning or do you have to drag him through the door? You know your dog best and are most qualified to assess his health and happiness. And, when it all works out well, you can go off to work guilt-free, knowing that each day is like a vacation for your dog.