



If you are considering becoming a registered **Pet Partners® Therapy Animal volunteer team** with your animal, here is some information for your consideration.

Before you can begin the process you and your animal must have good foundational obedience skills including a reliable “sit”, “down”, “stay”, “come when called” and “leave it”. Your animal should be able to walk at your side with a loose leash. (This list varies slightly depending on the species and the size of dog.)

Precise obedience skills are not required, however the handler must have control of their animal while visiting. You will need to work on being observant, seen to be working as a team, anticipating your animal’s responses, behavior and positions, and redirecting, as needed. If you feel you need more training, it is not mandatory, but recommended that both you and your animal enroll in a positive-reinforcement dog obedience course.

### Relationship Building Tools for Every Pet Partners® Team

P. E. T. S			
P – Presence/Proximity	E – Eye Contact	T – Touch	S – Speech & Tone

#### Typical ‘Attributes of a Great Therapy Animal’:

- Is comfortable being crowded by a group of people
- People-oriented/sociable, friendly and confident
- Will initiate contact, stay engaged, make eye contact, and allow their behaviors to be re-directed
- Is able to cope with stressful situations
- Knows how to respect personal boundaries; doesn’t jump up on people
- Is non-aggressive towards animals and people
- Is comfortable being touched, at times awkwardly
- Is controllable, predictable and reliable
- Well-mannered interactions with other animals
- Reliability despite distractions
- Ability to be cued from different positions
- Able to disregard food or toys on cue, i.e. with a “leave it” command
- Comfort level around health care equipment

#### Typical ‘Attributes of a Great Handler’:

- Is friendly – makes eye contact, smiles, etc
- Is a proactive advocate for their animal
- Is a considerate and caring leader
- Develops a relationship with their animal that reflects a loving partnership
- Prepares themselves and their animal for each visit
- Assesses a visit before, during and after
- Knows how to enhance their animal’s abilities to be its best with the people it’s visiting
- The handler is aware of signs of animal stress, behaviors, and positions, and can reassure their animal with cues, or commands (as needed) to help the animal be successful.