

Children Reading to Dogs "Tail Wagging Tutors"

**What do you get when you bring children, dogs and books together?
You get happy, confident children who love to read.**

Teachers, Librarians, children and parents agree--it's an unbeatable combination. A phenomenal program with far-reaching benefits.



General Information about TDI

Therapy Dogs International, Inc. (TDI) is a volunteer group organized to provide qualified handlers and their Therapy Dogs for visitations in a variety of facilities and settings.

TDI's Reading Program

The "Tail Waggin' Tutors" program is one of TDI's many services. Schools and Libraries have already discovered the value of Therapy Dogs. Once in school, some children might have a little trouble learning how to read, or be self-conscious about reading in front of classmates or teachers. Here is where we can be of help with our wonderful Therapy Dogs. It is so much fun for the children to read to a patient Therapy Dog. What an incentive!

How Does the Reading Program Work?

Libraries and Schools schedule reading hours for children and Therapy Dogs. Children and dogs bond together over a shared story. The children's confidence and reading skills grow in a relaxing environment. It's that simple.

Children who might be hesitant, embarrassed, or shy about their reading abilities feel at ease around a dog who is just there to listen to the story and not there to judge how well he or she reads. As Diane Mitchell, Branch Manager of Richland Public Library in Mississippi says, "More confidence in reading could lead to improved grades and improved grades mean happy children and parents."



Handler Linda Brubaker of Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania notes how teachers were moved by the program. One teacher stated, "The world is truly a better place with the love of Therapy Dogs to help kids to read." Vicki Hogan of Thomas C. Miller Elementary School agrees. Ms. Hogan reports that, "children who once struggled to read are now improving their skills and their confidence." An added bonus, Ms. Hogan says, "Children have developed a healthy appreciation for dogs and have learned to interact with dogs in a positive supportive situation."

Marybeth, the staff librarian of Sachem Public Library in Holbrook, NY calls the program a "wonderful initiative," and writes that at her library, "61 children are on a list of families willing to be called should an appointment become available, even with an hour's notice." She adds that one of the parents of a child participating in the program told her that, "Reading to the dogs has given my son the confidence to progress to higher reading levels with ease, as well as allowing him to look at reading as a positive activity that is both educational and enjoyable."

A note received by TDI Handler Jane Bonner from a parent participating in her reading program says, "Thanks so much! Being able to sit next to a big, but calm dog has really helped my son get over his fears."

Bernadette Duvernoy of Hayner Public Library in Alton, Illinois recalls how wonderful the response to her Bow-wow, Pow-wow reading program has been. What started with five or six kids has grown to 25 or more. Several parents commented on how much their children's reading (and desire to read) has improved. Ms. Duvernoy also states, "These animals have been wonderful for our children. The children learn that the library is a fun place to visit. They learn that dogs are sweet, gentle creatures that deserve respect and kindness."

TDI Dogs come in all shapes and sizes; real dogs with real personalities and real love to share. TDI's Reading Program is a wonderful opportunity for children to interact with and learn about dogs in a positive manner.

A child from Ashland Public Library says, "I like the Therapy Dogs to come to the Library because they'll sit there and listen to you read. They love it when you pet them. They're so nice and peaceful. When I grow up, I want to have a Therapy Dog."

"Children Reading to Dogs" is one facet of the many TDI programs. Schools or libraries may submit a written request to TDI for Therapy Dog visits. Facilities and handlers can then decide the specifics of their individual reading sessions. Make a difference in a child's life.