

There are hundreds of dog breeds, and each have been placed into a breed group, determined by what 'work' the breed was designed to do. Each breed has been created by humans, through selective breeding, to produce a dog that looks and acts in a particular way. However, regardless of breed, each dog has its own character and simply because a breed has a reputation of behaving a certain way does not give you a guarantee that your dog will fit in with this.

Different breed lines will be predisposed to hereditary health problems so it is worth looking into this when making your decision. Bear in mind also, what the public perception of your chosen breed will be. It is likely that you will want a dog that can act as a social bridge in the community. Dogs bred from current working lines are going to have different activity levels and needs compared to dogs bred from show or pet dog lines.

Crossbreeds

Crossbreeds (or mongrels) do not fit into any one of the breed groups because they are a combination of two or more breeds.

Whilst it can be difficult to predetermine what size a crossbreed puppy will grow to, and what they will look like, they do have advantages. There are differences depending on the parentage, but crossbreeds often have less hereditary health problems due to the absence of narrow selective breeding. They also have a mix of personalities and breed traits.

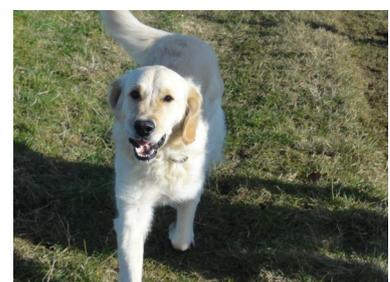
The best source of crossbreeds, young and older, is a reputable rescue or rehoming centre. Some crossbreeds, such as labradoodles, are now being seen as a breed of their own.

Gundogs

Gundogs were, and are, bred to help people on shoots, for example by flushing game out of vegetation and retrieving the animals that have been shot. Due to this they can have a desire to carry things in their mouths. Gundogs have been designed to be able to pick up and carry game without damaging it, which is why they are referred to as 'soft mouthed'. Dogs in this category can have high exercise requirements and would suit an active family.

Examples include:

- Labrador
- Golden Retriever
- Springer Spaniel



Terriers

Terriers were bred to catch and kill vermin, mainly by going to ground and digging animals out of their dens. This means that terriers can have a natural tendency to want to dig and have a keen interest in small furry animals. It is a good idea to socialise terriers with cats from a young age if they are to live with them.

With their history, again you can see that terriers are high energy dogs. This may mean that although you have a smaller home, you will still need to provide a large amount of exercise and stimulation to ensure you meet their needs.

Examples include:

- Border Terrier
- Jack Russell Terrier (a generic term for terriers of this type)



Pastoral

Breeds in this category were designed to work with livestock, such as sheep and cattle, either by rounding them up, or by living with and protecting them. The breeds used for herding have high energy levels that require plenty of exercise and also mental stimulation to keep them busy in a home environment. They often enjoy extra activities such as agility and games involving toys.

Herding breeds can be quite sensitive and react to loud noises due to their level of hearing. They can have a natural instinct to herd, especially around children. Selective breeding favouring individuals who want to work as a partnership with humans has meant that these dogs can require a lot of company and interaction.

Examples include:

- Border Collie
- German Shepherd Dog



Hounds

These dogs were bred to track and hunt animals, with some breeds required to bring down large prey.

Sight hounds, such as greyhounds, have a predisposed natural instinct to chase fast moving prey, whilst other, more scent orientated breeds, such as beagles can have a high interest in scents.

Examples include:

- Lurcher
- Dachsund

Toy

These are breeds which have been bred for companionship with humans. They are often small in size, and enjoy company and interaction with people. Whilst they can demand less activity and stimulation than some other breed types, these dogs can sometimes require quite a lot of motivation in training because they have been developed along different lines to working breeds.

As with all breeds, dogs in this category can be predisposed to certain health problems, but in this case a lot of these issues are related to the dog's size.

Examples include:

- Yorkshire Terrier
- Pug
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel



Working

Breeds in this category have been designed to aid humans in a variety of ways, including search and rescue, and are often physically large in size.

Examples include:

- Boxer
- Newfoundland

Utility

This is the category that is used in the UK to describe breeds which were originally bred to serve a purpose, including those from other categories, but are not traditionally placed in the other groupings. It is necessary to look at what each individual breed was originally designed for as they are so diverse.

Examples include:

- Dalmation (originally bred to run alongside, as a carriage dog)

Summary for choosing that right dog

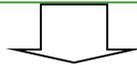
Putting together our experiences in **Family Dog**, here is a simple flow chart to help you find the right dog for you and your family. This is something that we support families through in a huge amount more detail throughout the **Family Dog** workshops.

TAKE TIME TO RESEARCH THE NEEDS OF YOUR FAMILY

This may be best to do indirectly, rather than asking children directly what dog they want. For example, note down the responses of your children when they are interacting with your friends' dogs.

CONSIDER ;

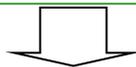
- PREFERENCES; e.g. What size dog does your child prefer, small, medium or large?
- SENSITIVITIES; e.g. What colour does your child prefer?
- PAST EXPERIENCES; e.g. Has your child had a positive or aversive experience with a dog? If so, what did this dog look like?
- ALLERGIES; It may be that you need to speak with your GP to identify whether your family member is allergic to hair, dander or saliva of dogs. It may determine what coat type you go for or how you manage taking on a dog at all.
- PRACTICALITIES; Think about how much time, space, and finance you have in place for a dog.



DECIDE SIMPLY ON THE SIZE OF DOG TO GO FOR

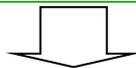
It can be overwhelming to select the right dog for you. So simply based on your observations in answering the above, decide whether your home and family would suit a SMALL dog, MEDIUM dog or LARGE dog.

From this you can pull up a list of up to ten dog breeds that fit into this height category. There are many books that categorise dogs by size which can be very useful.



ELIMINATE CHOICES FROM THIS LIST BY CHOOSING COAT TYPE

So now you can start eliminating the options of dog types off this list. For example, based on your child's preferences, does your child prefer a SMOOTH, SHORT, WIRY, or LONG texture to touch. This can have a big impact on the end child-dog relationship.



CONSIDER WHAT THESE DOGS HAVE BEEN BRED TO DO

As we have said previously, there is no definite right or wrong dog breed to choose from. Often breed descriptions on websites or in books have phrases such as "this dog is good at training" or "this is a great dog for children".

These statements are unfortunately not based on any real evidence, more on the opinion of the author. We advise that rather than taking note of such statements, instead read up on the history of the breed. For example WHAT HAS THIS DOG BEEN BRED TO DO?

So that you can answer WILL THAT FIT IN WITH MY FAMILY?

For example, border collies are examples of working dogs. They have been bred over many years to be great working dogs, high energy and very alert. This would mean that a border collie is not the dog to go for if you want a 'lap' dog to sleep on the sofa with you throughout the day.