

A Guardian Dog for Children

A prospective owner hopes to find the right breed to protect and interact with his two young daughters.

By Allan Reznik

Q. My family consists of myself, my wife, and two daughters (ages 5 and 3). We have recently put a deposit on a Cane Corso puppy which we will get in October. I have some experience in owning a Rottweiler. I work a swing shift which leaves my "girls" home alone at night 2 out of every 3 weeks. We want a dog who will be naturally protective of its family, however it must do well with children. Over the weekend, a local Giant Schnauzer breeder told us that we were crazy for wanting a Corso to join our family and that of course, her breed was right for us. We understand that Corsos must be socialized and trained at a young age and we are willing to do all of that. Can you give me your opinion on our situation? I don't want to forfeit our deposit, but if that stops us from making a big mistake, then I'll do that.

A. I don't think you can make sweeping generalizations about one breed being better suited than another. All the breeds you've mentioned – Rottweiler, Cane Corso, Giant Schnauzer – are guardian breeds that will be naturally protective of their loved ones. Socialization is essential for all breeds, and should begin at puppyhood. Responsible breeders make this a priority.

I wonder if you've visited your Cane Corso breeder in person and met the parents of your puppy to be? Good temperament is inherited. Does the breeder have children of her own?

One concern I have is that your daughters are very young, and both the Cane Corso and the Giant Schnauzer are large, powerful dogs that might knock your children over in energetic play. You and your wife will need to supervise their interaction.

A well-bred, well-socialized Cane Corso from a responsible kennel that breeds for good temperament makes a great family dog. The same can be said for a Giant Schnauzer raised with the same priorities.