

A Low-Shedding, Kid-Friendly Dog

Pet sitter searches for the right dog for her lifestyle with certain criteria.

By Allan Reznik

Q. I am a vet tech and a professional pet sitter, but I'm still confused about dog breeds. I am looking for a dog breed that doesn't shed (though it leaves out a lot of good breeds for agility), doesn't bark, and is great with kids. Also, I'd like a breed that is amazing with all animals, being reared with animals, and visiting my clients.

I have spoken to dog clubs' presidents as well as local training clubs, and all seem to be a little biased. Thank you in advance for your time in this very important decision.

A. Well, the combination of traits you're asking for in a single dog makes this rather a tall order. But let's give it a try.

I would discount the smaller, low-shedding breeds (Yorkshire Terrier, Bichon Frise) because their size may make them less than ideal with the young animals you are expecting the dog to grow up with, nor do they always do well with young children.

I also don't think an Afghan Hound would be ideal since the breed can be a challenge on the agility course, won't appreciate being mauled by children, and may or may not feel maternally/paternally inclined toward young animals.

I suggest considering a Standard Poodle, Portuguese Water Dog, or Irish Water Spaniel. All are energetic, make fine agility dogs, are great with kids, have low-shedding coats, and tend to be fairly sociable with other dogs and species. I would explain to an experienced breeder what you need your dog to be, and trust her to choose the most gregarious and easygoing puppy to best fit your home environment.