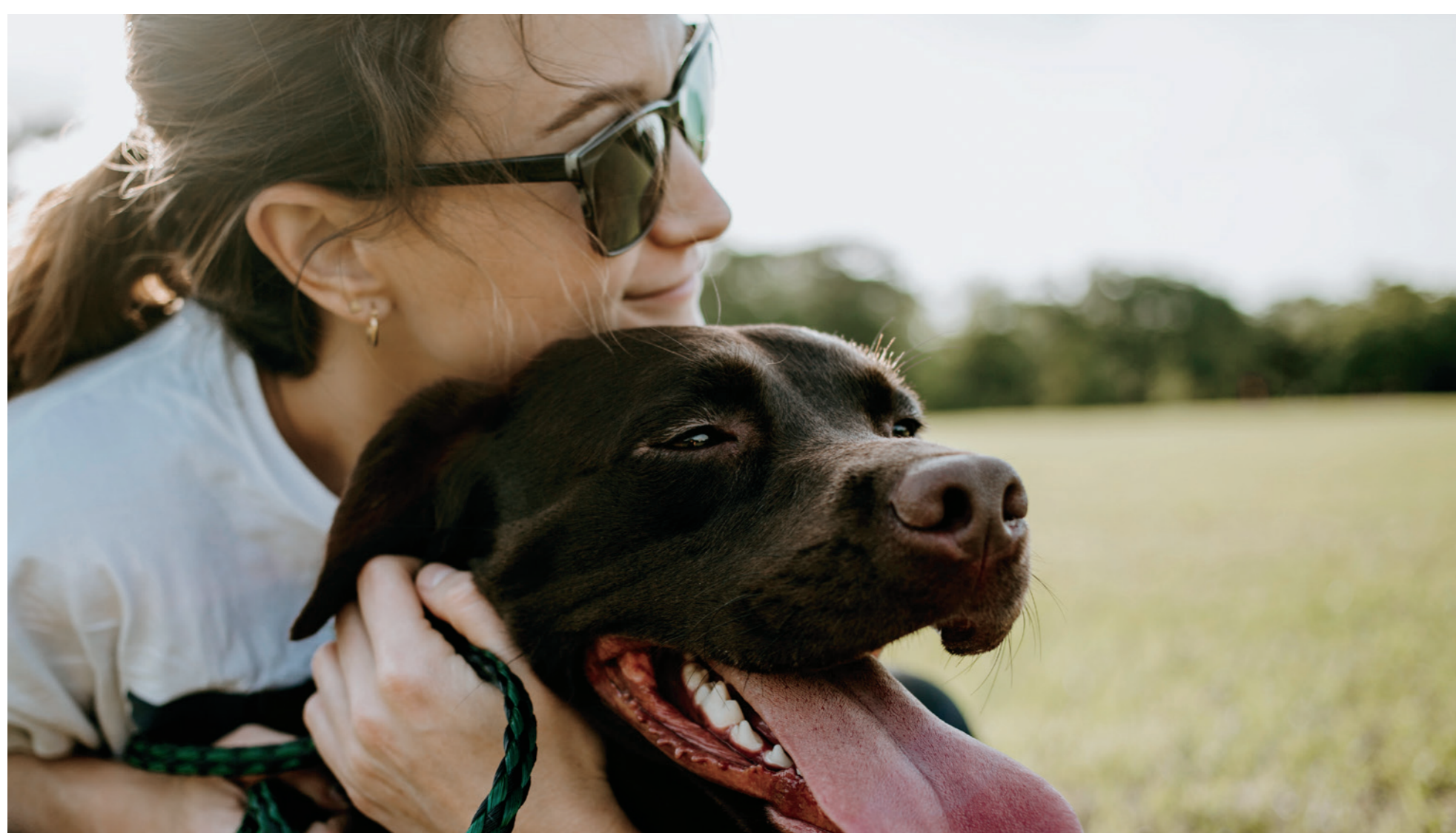


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# Kidtelligence



## PETS ARE KIDS' BEST BET

During the pandemic many families chose to become first time pet owners. Turns out finally giving into to the insistent cries of "Can we get a dog...please," has a whole kennel full of health and wellness benefits for children.

**Moods and Emotions** - Playing with pets has a positive effect on emotions and has been linked to reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression in children.

"When compared to children in non-dog-owning households, children with a dog in the home were 23% less likely to have difficulties with their emotions and social interactions; 30% percent less likely to engage in antisocial behaviors; 40% percent less likely to have problems interacting with other children; and 34% percent more likely to engage in considerate behaviors, such as sharing," Steven Feldman, president of the Human Animal Bond Research Institute.

**"Studies have found that the mere presence of a family pet during childhood can increase emotional expression and control in children, and research supports that even brief interactions with dogs can lower stress levels in children."**

- Steven Feldman

**Creating Routine** - Having a set schedule to rely on helps kids flourish and taking care of a pet is a perfect way to teach kids important life skills like following a routine and the importance of responsibility and follow through. Gina McDowell, an LPCC and behavioral health clinical educator said, "Having kids be a part of that routine and structure benefits both the child and their friend. Additionally, allowing your child to participate in these tasks provides a sense of purpose and responsibility, improving feelings of self-worth."

**Building Social Skills** - Children build emotional bonds with their pets that help them develop social skills related to compassion, caring and kindness.

"Pets offer vital lessons around boundaries, connection, respect, and empathy," explains Jackie Tassiello, a licensed board-certified art therapist. "Pets need care and connection, which activates the ability [in kids] to act in empathetic, compassionate ways and form strong bonds." (Simone Marie for Psych Central)

**Kids With Autism** - Being around pets at home or at school has been shown to improve family functioning and social functioning for kids on the Autism spectrum.

"The research found that children with autism experienced significant increases in the social skill of empathy, significant decreases in problem behaviors including bullying and hyperactivity/inattention, and also less separation anxiety after the introduction of a shelter cat," Feldman explained, noting that many participants showed increases and improvements in social behaviors like talking, making physical contact looking at faces and being more receptive to social advances from peers." (Caroline Bologna for Huffington Post)

According to the American Pet Products Association, Americans spent \$103 billion on pets in 2020 and 109 billion in 2021. Much of this spending was on items to pamper pets. If you're a brand connected to the pet space the bigger opportunity may be in finding ways to help kids develop an even closer bond with their pets. (Rachel King for Fortune)