

Great Teaching Ideas!

TO SUPPORT LITERACY SKILLS

- Weekly reading logs
- Make your therapy dog the star of a story
- Meet reading fluency goals
- Research projects
- Trading Card lesson for characterization, organizing information and summarizing
- Read first draft of writing to the dog to encourage self-editing
- Provide motivation and active engagement in Reading/Writing/Speaking/Listening
- Nonjudgmental/positive literacy experiences to build self-confidence
- Vocabulary development
- Address IEP goals
- Address grade appropriate Common Core Standards
- Create a blog about the therapy dog
- “Dress Rehearsal” with the dog prior to giving oral reports, performances and presentations
- Create KWL and KWLS graphic organizers about the therapy dog

TO SUPPORT MATH SKILLS

- Practice math facts with the therapy dog
- Give dog scenarios for problem-solving practice
- Fractions with the therapy dog
- Measurement
- Math probes
- Estimating lessons using the therapy dog
- Have students create problems for each other using the therapy dog
- Money skills to determine how much it costs to own a dog
- Measuring ingredients to make dog treats
- Survey class about their family pets and graph the results

TO SUPPORT BEHAVIOR GOALS

- Incentive/ Reward system
- Earn extra time with the therapy dog

- Reward students by letting them walk the dog and handler to and from the office
- Defuse disruptions/confrontations with calming their presence
- Increase student engagement in lessons
- Provides a safe, non-judgmental listener
- Counseling
- Calming anxiety

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Tolerance and acceptance
- Social communication
- Taking turns
- Ask/Answer questions
- Greetings
- Commenting

OTHER SUBJECT AREAS

- Provide authentic communication opportunities
- Content area vocabulary development
- Research the history of your dog’s breed and map it as part of a Geography lesson
- Provide motivation to meet grade level Common Core standards for Speaking
- Discuss/research and create a model of your therapy dog’s habitat as part of a Science lesson
- Discuss/research working dogs as part of a Social Studies lesson
- Practice reading fluency with ELL students
- Provide non-judgmental listener for students learning to speak English
- Create bulletin board displays highlighting lessons with the therapy dog



NOR'WESTER THERAPY DOGS

Canine Partners in Education



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

HOW YOU CAN MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR THERAPY DOG TEAM!



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THERE'S A DOG IN YOUR CLASSROOM!

- Are you a teacher that ONLY uses your therapy dog for reading?
- Are you a teacher that does the same thing week after week with your therapy dog team?
- Are you a teacher that only uses your therapy dog team the hour they visit your class?

If so, then you are losing precious opportunities to enrich your curricular goals and enhance your educational environment! Remember, your therapy dog team is a “teaching tool which can be incorporated into your lesson plans all week long!”

Ask yourself: How can I “think outside the box” and expand my professional methodology to gain maximum benefits from the presence of my classroom therapy dog?

Therapy dog teams can make magical things happen in the classroom. But it’s up to YOU, the teacher, to apply the “magic formulas” to make it become real.

Dog + Child = comfort, happiness, relaxation

Research has proved that the presence of an animal lowers blood pressure and stress, setting the scene for a relaxed learning environment, which is highly conducive to academic success

Dog + Child + Facilitator = confidence and self esteem

In addition to a dog and child, a skilled facilitator (teacher or handler) shifts performance pressure off the child and provides positive support throughout the learning process. This formula has been shown to boost student confidence and self-esteem.



Dog + Curriculum + Strategies = motivation, focus, and success

Put a therapy dog into the hands of an enthusiastic, creative teacher and maximize the power of motivating students and directing their focus so they can experience the success of academic achievement. Teachers should plan in advance for the team’s weekly visit and utilize the team as a teaching tool (strategies) to add a powerful punch to successfully presenting the curriculum.

Dog + Child + Books = Joy of reading

Putting a dog into this equation encourages the child to tackle his/her reading challenges, whether remedial or of an *alliterate nature, in the presence of an accepting, non-judgmental companion. The presence of a dog also serves to shift performance

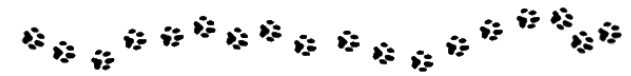


pressure off the student and aids them in perceiving themselves as a teacher or mentor to the dog. This is validating, empowering, and satisfying for the student and ultimately results in discovering the joy of reading.

Dog + Child + Love of Reading = Read to LEARN
When a child embraces a love of books and reading by the side of their therapy dog, the groundwork has been set for the child to “read to learn” and become a lifelong reader and learner. This formula conquers the dilemma of *aliteracy so prevalent today.

*ALITERACY: A new phenomenon which is simply the lack of the reading habit in capable readers. It is becoming known as the invisible epidemic. ~Anderson, T. “The Dangerous Step Above Literacy.”

The **Nor’wester** organization conducted a three year study on the benefits of therapy dogs in class-



rooms, and it verified what we already knew - that therapy dogs used consistently, creatively, and with intent in an educational environment, reaped amazing and unparalleled results in student achievement.

Nor’wester Therapy Dogs has become unique for its canine partners in education pro-



gram. While reading dog organizations emphasize using therapy dogs to foster motivation and a love for reading with students experiencing reading challenges, **Nor’wester Therapy Dogs** has gone beyond and has become a TRUE learning program.

THE CARE AND RESPECT OF YOUR THERAPY DOG TEAM

Your therapy dog handler is a caring, committed, and unpaid volunteer. They set time aside weekly in their schedule to prepare for their visit and travel to your school. This service is provided FREE.

DO:

- * Make them feel welcome and express your appreciation for their help and commitment.
- * Be prepared for their visit and ready to start when they arrive.
- * Communicate your expectations clearly and share your instructional goals for the therapy dog’s visit.
- * Always alert the handler in a timely fashion of schedule changes that will affect their visit.