

CanineSidekicks Therapy Dog Development Program

Owner-Trained Program Overview

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Therapy Dog Development Owner-Trained Program is designed for individuals, organizations, schools, healthcare facilities, community programs, and volunteer teams who wish to develop and certify their own therapy dog under professional guidance. This pathway combines individualized coaching, structured skill development, public access preparation, therapy-specific training, facility preparation, and certification readiness.

PROGRAM PATHWAYS

Fast-Track Certification Pathway

- Twelve (12) one-hour private training sessions
- Therapy Dog Suitability Assessment
- Certification Evaluation
- Official CanineSidekicks Therapy Dog Certificate
- Personalized Therapy Dog Identification Card
- Website Verification Listing
- Access to Puppy FUNdamentals 2.0
- Access to Life Skills Level 1
- Access to Therapy Dog Development training resources

Foundation Development Pathway

- Twenty-four (24) one-hour private training sessions
- Therapy Dog Suitability Assessment
- Certification Evaluation
- Official CanineSidekicks Therapy Dog Certificate
- Personalized Therapy Dog Identification Card
- Website Verification Listing
- Access to Puppy FUNdamentals 2.0
- Access to Life Skills Level 1
- Access to Therapy Dog Development training resources

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Dogs accepted into the program undergo structured development including suitability assessment, obedience training, socialization, environmental exposure, confidence building,

public access preparation, therapy-specific social interaction training, facility preparation, real-world application, and certification preparation.

PUBLIC ACCESS SKILLS

Training includes loose leash walking, public settling, controlled greetings, neutrality around people and animals, stores and shopping environments, restaurants and public facilities, libraries, schools and educational settings, medical facilities, elevators and automatic doors, vehicle travel, crowded environments, extended public outings, and community events.

CARE, OBEDIENCE & CONTROL

Training includes marker-based communication, sit, down, place, recall, loose leash walking, greeting manners, impulse control, household manners, vehicle manners, social skills, cooperative care procedures, and grooming and handling tolerance.

ADVANCED THERAPY DOG SKILLS

Training includes appropriate social engagement, calm interaction with unfamiliar people, acceptance of physical affection from a variety of individuals, maintaining composure around emotional displays, controlled interactions with children and seniors, working around mobility aids and medical equipment, maintaining focus despite frequent social interaction, appropriate settling during visits, and professional behaviour within therapy environments.

FACILITY PREPARATION

Dogs are prepared for therapy work within schools, libraries, healthcare facilities, long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities, community wellness programs, support programs, public events, and other approved therapy environments.

CERTIFICATION PACKAGE

Successful graduates receive:

- Certification Evaluation
- Official CanineSidekicks Therapy Dog Certificate
- Personalized Therapy Dog Identification Card
- Website Verification Listing
- Eligibility for Annual Recertification

CERTIFICATION & RECERTIFICATION

Therapy dog certification is valid for three (3) years. To maintain Active Certification status, teams must successfully complete annual recertification requirements and remain in compliance with all program standards, policies, and ethical requirements. Teams that fail to complete annual recertification may have their website verification status updated to Expired Certification until recertification requirements have been completed.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The goal of this program is to develop reliable, highly trained therapy dog teams capable of providing safe, positive, and meaningful interactions within schools, healthcare facilities, community programs, and other approved environments.