



Your dog must possess several qualities, as well as you as the dog's handler. Here is a list of things we test on in our certification test. This is a good check list that you can use to determine if your dog could make the grade or may need some additional training.

### Canine's Abilities & Temperament

You can test your own dog's skills & abilities in many situations to see if your dog needs some additional work or if you may be ready to tackle the therapy dog test.

- Can your dog perform tasks reliably (asked no more than twice) when requested by you, this includes:
  - sit on command
  - lie down on command
  - leave it on command
  - walk well on a loose-leash at all times (including around other dogs)
  - get off of a person, bed, chair on command (without being physically removed)
- How does your dog respond when requested to perform a task? Is he/she happy to comply? Does he/she show signs of confusion, stress or not respond quickly or maybe not at all?
- Does your dog seem comfortable with you and the task you have requested? Does he/she show signs of confusion, stress or not respond quickly or maybe not at all?
- Is your dog comfortable & confident around others—adults, children, different races, etc.? Does he/she happily greet others without any shyness, over-exuberance or fear?
- Is your dog over-exuberant, reactive (lunging, tugging on-leash), mild-mannered or calm around other dogs? Can you easily control your dog without having to offer corrections when on leash and/or around other dogs?
- Can your dog obey commands reliably around other dogs without you having to repeat them and without paying more attention to the other dog rather than you?
- Does your dog accept petting willingly with no shyness, fear or aggression?
- Is your dog willing to be petted for long periods of time without agitation, stress or fear? *(If you don't know signs of stress we encourage you to read about them as many are not obvious to the eye without vast knowledge of the many signals that dogs can give when stressed.)*
- Is your dog willing to be draped on, hugged or petted with a "heavy hand" by persons of all ages?
- Does your dog startle to: sounds, wheelchairs, canes, people walking with an uneven gait, loud & obnoxious people, screaming kids & crowded places.?

We also test the human's abilities as well. Being alert, in-tune and well versed in doggie language is key to a better relationship with your dog, especially when embarking on a journey with a therapy dog.

On the next page we list out the test items that our evaluators look for with the handler when they are handling their dog in these set up situations and during training.

**Handler's Abilities & Attentiveness**

These are things that the evaluator tests the handler on. The answer to all of the following must be a resounding "Yes" or you will not pass your test.

- Does the handler possess good handling skills—has the dog on a loose leash & in complete control?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Does the handler know when the dog is stressed & respond appropriately?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Does the handler know how to handle the dog if it shows signs of stress?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Does the handler know how to keep his/her dog happy, upbeat & excited about the task being performed and/or requested?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Do the handler and dog have an obvious understanding & work well as a team?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Does the handler seem stressed or nervous?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Does the handler get frustrated easily if the dog doesn't comply?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- How does the handler handle the dog if he/she is not responding well?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Is the handler calm & comfortable at all times?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No
  
- Is the handler in tune with the dog as well as his/her surroundings?  
 Yes    Room for improvement    No

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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