

Prerequisites

In order for a handler/pet team to complete the course successfully, there are several factors for you to consider before committing to this class:

Pet Aptitude: Confident, calm, and cooperative, gets along with various animals and people, adjusts to changes and uncertainties in the environment. Animals that don't get along well with other animals or have a strong prey drive are not suitable for pet therapy classes.

Pet Manners/Obedience: Dogs must have basic obedience skills prior to starting class. This includes: sit, down, stay, heel, come. Dogs that have not mastered these skills should postpone taking the class until proficient. Animals also should be able to greet people/animals calmly; take treats gently; walk with a loose leash; walk calmly through a crowd. Hand pets should be well socialized and able to stay where you put them.

Pet Age: Pets must be 12 months of age or older prior to start of class.

Handler Age: Handlers must be at least 12 years of age and accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times until they are 16 years of age. Handlers need a parent's approval from the age of 16 – 18 years of age.

Handler aptitude: Enjoys meeting strangers, able to initiate conversation, good listening skills, ability to empathize without getting emotionally involved, polite, able to concentrate on pet's behavior and client's behavior simultaneously and to act on it. Maintain confidentiality as dictated by federal law.