



A companion dog provides a bridge for a child with autism to connect with the world around them.

Studies have shown that autism service dogs reduce stress hormone levels in children with autism. Parents are reporting many other benefits that these faithful, hard-working companions provide as well. Here are more of the life-enhancing experiences that can be attributed to owning a companion dog:

CALMING

- dog provides a sense of security
- decreases meltdowns
- decreases anxiety and acts of aggression
- increases willingness to try new things
- increases ability to face fearful situations

SOCIAL

- increases social interaction due to the dog taking the focus off the child's disability
- decreases self absorption
- decreases undesirable behaviors (dog can redirect the child)

COMMUNICATION

- improves social skills due to added motivation
- encourages verbal communication, increased vocabulary

COMPANIONSHIP

- loyal and constant companion
- unconditional and non-judgmental friend
- teaches concepts of friendship like compassion, patience and empathy

INDEPENDENCE

- increases feeling of empowerment
- dog can help with daily living skill
- increases sense of responsibility

QUALITY OF LIFE

- improves motor skills and increase physical activity level
- improves quality of sleep
- provides positive community buffer

and, of course, less stressful family outings like really nice walks