There are many reasons why parents in general - my parents particularly - should get a puppy for their children (me!). Dogs have been an important part of people’s lives for 18,000-32,000 years. Growing up, I have always wanted a puppy for many reasons. Puppies are great companions and almost everyone in my extended family has a puppy, so I want one too! My parents have a busy work life and my brother doesn’t have time for me, so I believe that a dog would be a great companion. Plus, puppies are completely adorable and fun to be around! In addition, owning a dog has many benefits that they can provide for us. Here are some facts about why parents in general - and my parents in particular - should get a dog for their children (me!).

First, dogs are great companions for kids and teenagers when growing up. The dog grows up with the child, as the dog grows up with the child the dog becomes the child’s best friend. Dogs give an unlimited amount of love to the owner and the family. According to a website of The Association of Professional Dog Trainers, “if you have the time to invest in a dog, the rewards are enormous.” Also VetRating from (Life Lessons, 2016) said, “Dogs are great companion animals, though every canine is unique. Finding the right pet can make a huge difference in both the dog’s happiness and your own. The personality of a dog who fits in perfectly with a single man in his 30s might be drastically different than a pooch who works well with small children, active teenagers or an elderly couple.”

Dogs also help teens, kids, and their parents to be more relaxed from stress and will help them to recover more quickly from health issues. From a paragraph in an
article called, “Wagging tails make good medicine” from Children’s Mercy Hospital in
Kansas City, “the therapeutic value of dogs on sick children has been known for years, and other hospitals, including University of Kansas Hospital, use them. Dogs cheer up kids, and emotional health plays a factor in physical health by reducing stress, calming, and improving spirits.” Another thing from Dogs help humans reduce stress from the website (Dogs Help, 2016) said, “Playing with or petting an animal can increase levels of the stress-recovery.” Also they said “In a 2001 study, researchers found that pet-owning patients with high blood pressure could keep their blood pressure lower during times of mental stress than patients without pets.”

Another reason why parents should get a dog for their children is that a dog can help children to be more social. Dogs are very social creatures and love to make contact with other living beings. According to an article, “7 Good Reasons Why You Should Get a Dog for Your Kids,” from (7 Good Reasons, 2016) “A dog’s companionship will prevent your kids from depression and loneliness.” A dog is a great member of the family, especially when parents are rarely home and are busy with their jobs. Also when you walk a dog and pass a person, most likely the dog will want to meet the person. When people take their pet to dog parks, training classes, outdoor cafes, and other places, they are more likely to meet new people in a positive way. They’ll interact with other dog owners and meet other dogs too. According to an article called “Places to Mix and Mingle With Your Pet” from the website, (Places To Mix, 2015) “Dog parks are a great way for both you and your dog to play and interact with other dogs and owners. This can benefit you as well as the dog. It can help improve social skills and improve health from exercising.”Another thing that “Places To Mix and Mingle With
Your Pet” said about being more social is to take your dog to outdoor cafes. “Lots of restaurants with outdoor seating are also pet-friendly, and some even offer dog-specific items on the menu. This is a good place to bring your dog for a relaxing environment. The occasional interaction with other people or pets may occur, but for the most part, this is a great way for you and your pet to spend time together.”

Dogs also encourage kids who like to stay indoors to go outside more. An article entitled, “Good Reasons To Get A Dog” said “a dog can increase the contact with the outside world while providing meaning and structure to one's life.” Kids Who Own Dogs Are More Active (Staff By Live, 2010) did some research with youth who are ages nine and ten for seven days. The researchers from St George's, University of London used activity monitors to record movement levels of 2,065 children ages nine and ten over the course of seven days. The kids came from 78 schools in London, Birmingham and Leicester, 202 of them owned dogs. The research could have implications for childhood obesity in the United States, where 17 percent of 2- to 19-year-olds are obese, according to a 2007-2008 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Among 6- to 19-year-olds, obesity has tripled over the past two decades, according to the CDC. The researchers from St George's, University of London used activity monitors to record movement levels of 2,065 children ages 9 and 10 over the course of seven days. The kids came from 78 schools in London, Birmingham and Leicester, 202 of them owned dogs. Results showed children with dogs spent an average of 325 minutes (more than five hours) doing physical activity per day, many more minutes than those without household dogs. This included time spent in light, moderate, moderate to vigorous, and vigorous activity. Dog owners also spent 11 fewer
minutes (562 minutes over the seven-day stint) in sedentary behavior each day. The pet owners were found to take 360 more steps (4 percent) than the other kids.”

Furthermore, a dog can help young people learn good life skills like responsibility, patience, and also learn about consequences. How they could become more responsible is that they would be taking care of another living being. They would have to feed, walk, groom, and train the dog daily. According to The Association of Professional Dog Trainers, “Children can learn great life skills such as compassion, responsibility, negotiation and patience by helping to care for a pet.” Dogs Trust from (Children Will, 2016) says that “Owning a dog as a family can be extremely rewarding as dogs can act as companions and support for children. They can also provide children with a sense of responsibility as they can get involved with their daily care and understand the commitment involved in owning a dog.” The result is that when youngsters don’t take responsibility for feeding their dog, the dog will die of starvation. Also the dog could die from the child feeding the dog food that it’s not supposed to eat. Another benefit to having a dog is learning the life skill of patience, by training a family dog. It takes time to teach the dog how to sit, stay, and lay down.

Dogs also help kids learn about life, like important issues such as getting older, death, and dying. The lifespan of a dog is much shorter than a human’s lifespan. A dog’s lifespan is usually 10-15 years, while a human’s lifespan is closer to 75 years. First Childhood Death Experiences from the website (First Childhood Death, 2016) said “28 percent of kids’ first death experience has been involved with the pet they raised.” According to OMEGA Journal Of Death And Dying, “Children’s responses to death show emotions similar to those expressed by adults.” The article also says that,
“it is clear that childhood experiences flavored with death, loss, or separation can become important influences on the way one sees life and copes with death.”

Another reason is that your daughters would be healthier, so when they take their dog on a walk, they would be get exercised daily too. A website that I’ve found, healthypets.mercola.com says “your dog can be a great workout partner, even if you’re just starting to exercise. Unlike a human companion, your dog will always be ready to get up and go. Since dogs love having a daily routine they can count on, your dog will be happy to remind you when it’s time to exercise each day. Sometimes the dog will make their owners actually run from all the pulling and excitement that occurs during a walk. Another fact from Healthy Pets is, “Working out together can provide important health benefits for both you and your dog. These include lowering your risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and joint disease. Not only will you get in better shape, but your canine companion will also benefit both physically and mentally. Bored, under-exercised dogs often develop behavioral problems that are resolved by adding more physical activity into their daily routine.” Also according to Dogs Trust from (Children Will, 2016), “42% say the family take more exercise thanks to the pet dog”. Also by getting more exercise, you will have less of a chance of getting cardiovascular disease also known as heart disease. The requirement of getting exercise is about thirty minutes for an average person per day. The article, “Why Walking Your Dog is Great Exercise” (Why Pet Dogs, 2013) says “only 16 percent of Americans ages 15 and older exercised at all on an average day”. Another fact is that” Today our nation’s children are spending more time playing indoors on technology than ever before, so the charity is keen to
highlight the benefits of dog ownership for the whole family.” said by Dogs Trust from (Children Will, 2016).

One very important reason to own a dog is that having a family dog can get your kids off of their electronics; by walking them they have to drop the technology and go exercise. Dogs Trust (Children Will, 2016) made a survey of parents and the result was “69% of parents surveyed grew up with a dog and of those, 93% believe their family pet enriched their own childhood, Of those surveyed who felt their family dog enriched their childhood, 39% said it taught them responsibility. Now that they are parents themselves, over half (54%) of those polled who had a pet dog when they were younger now have one for their own children. Also 43% of those who have dogs now have sentimentally chosen the same breed they had when they were growing up.” Also another thing, Dogs Trust (Children Will, 2016) is starting a “Get A Dog” program to encourage families to have a technology-free summer this year. They have also made a video comparing the fun of a dog to the fun of electronics and encouraging parents to get a dog for their family. Dogs Trust (Children Will, 2016) also said “No one remembers a day spent gaming, but a family day out making memories with your dog won’t be forgotten. The summer holidays are a fantastic time to introduce a new dog to your family because the kids are around to enjoy those special first months together. It’s time to put down the iPad and walk away from the Wii and… get a dog.”

Furthermore, parents should get a dog for their child because the dog can help to protect the family. A guard dog can be a good source of protection, “Protectiveness comes from a dog’s wolf ancestors and centuries of breeding, which means that dogs instinctively know when a human child is in need of care,” said the article, “Why Dogs
Another fact is that a dog can be a great home security system, because of their good sense of hearing. According to this article, “Facts About Guard Dogs” (Does Your Property, 2016), dogs have really good hearing, so they’re able to know if a trespasser is near before anyone else does. When they hear an unfamiliar sound, they will most likely start to bark. The bark of a guard dog alerts people to know that something is wrong and also tells the intruder that he/she has been caught. The bark is like the alarm of an installed home security system, but a dog alarms people faster than a home security system. A home security alarm only goes off when a person breaks in, but a dog can tell if an intruder comes anywhere near to your property. Of course, people can install a home security system, but that would cost hundreds of dollars. By getting a dog, your home will be safe, and it’s much cheaper than buying a home security system.

Another reason why your parents should get you a dog is that they could save a life. Dogs can sometimes help to detect all kinds of health problems, from seizures, cancer, drowning, other kinds of attacks and so on. From an article, “25 Heroic Dogs and How They Saved People,” (25 Heroic Dogs, 2016), A black lab named Katrina saved a drowning man from a flood in New Orleans. Also an English bulldog, Napoleon dived into a lake and brought to shore a bag with six kittens inside, but two of the kittens have unfortunately drowned and died. Incredible Stories of Dogs Saving Human Lives from a story called “Angel the Dog Saves Boy from Cougar”--Austin Forman, an 11-year-old boy, was playing in his yard when a cougar suddenly charged him from out of nowhere. Before he could react, his dog leaped in front of him to ward off the wild animal. The 18-month-old Golden Retriever courageously fought the much larger cougar so that the boy
could get to safety. The family then called 911, and a policeman put the cougar down. The brave dog, appropriately named Angel, was seriously injured by her fight with the cougar but she made a full recovery." Another story called "Dog Saves Baby from Rattlesnake," Booker West, a 12-month-old child, was splashing water in the bird bath when a rattlesnake cornered him and tried to strike. Within moments, Zoey a five-pound Chihuahua rushed the snake and attacked it. The snake bit the dog, but little Zoey made a full recovery. Her act of bravery saved the baby from a poisonous snake bite."

Also another reason your parents should get you a dog is that the dog could help your child with issues. A dog could help by being a service dog for the kids who are deaf or blind or they could become a therapy dog. Some other ways for dogs to help your kid is that if your kid is getting stressed out from school, animal allergies, and physical or mental health issues. Dogs could help kids develop a resistance to allergies. One way to prevent children from having so many animal allergies is to allow them the opportunity of taking care of a dog. Studies show that kids growing up in a house with a dog are children who are less likely to develop allergies later in life. According to an article on AnimalPlanet.com about University of Wisconsin-Madison pediatrician James E. Gern, having a pet in the home can actually lower a child's likelihood of developing pet-related allergies by as much as 33 percent. In fact, his research -- as published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology -- shows that "children exposed early on to animals tend to develop stronger immune systems overall."

Also a therapy dog is similar to a service dog, but they go to hospitals, nursing homes, schools and libraries. A sentence in *Therapy Dogs* by Kimberly M. Hutman says "People in hospitals feel better by petting dogs." She also states "children practice
reading to therapy dogs. They think it’s more fun to read to dogs than to adults.”

Another thing is that they can help you by helping you recover from a mental health issue called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD can happen to people who have witnessed a horrifying event during their lifetime. Paws for people says “Humans interacted with their pet dogs and found that stroking the animal promoted the release of serotonin, prolactin and oxytocin” (www.PAWSforPeople.org). While dogs cannot only help recovery from a mental issue, they can help recovery from some illnesses.

Children’s Mercy Hospital developed a program for sick children. The program involves two therapy dogs. They bring the dogs to visit some of the sick kids around the hospital.

In conclusion, there is tons of research about why your parents should get you a dog and what benefits would come to the family by bringing into a dog home. To summarize, those reasons are that dogs can help kids by improving their health and immunity, protecting their homes, and most importantly protecting or saving their lives. I am asking you to please imagine what your child’s life would be like with a dog and without a dog, knowing all of these benefits. Dogs have been always there for us, now it’s time to let a dog be there for your children!
Bibliography


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