

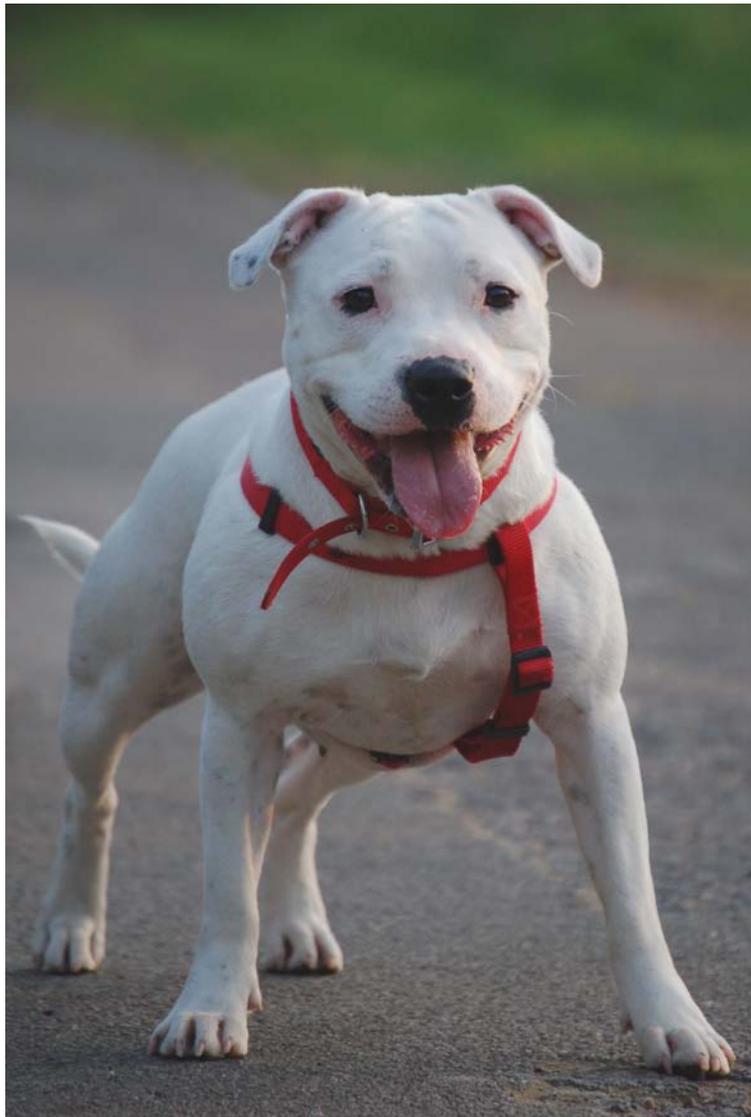


## SIX WAYS PETS CAN HELP CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Page 1 of 2

By Rosalind Sedacca

November 28, 2012



*EDITOR'S NOTE: When I started our survey of divorce at [DivorceMinistry4Kids.com](http://DivorceMinistry4Kids.com), one of the things that surprised me the most was how often I heard children express that one of their major losses during the divorce of their parents was a loss of pets. In this article, Rosalind Sedacca explores six ways that pets can be helpful to children and families going through a divorce.*

Can a pet be helpful to your children during a divorce and the transition after? Without a doubt! If your family has one or more pets, let your children have access to them as much as they desire. There is a great emotional benefit to your children, and they are fortunate that the pets they love can still be in their lives.

If you don't already have a pet, I recommend getting one – but only if you are in a position to be responsible to that innocent animal during this time of additional stress in your life. If a family pet is out of the question, please consider giving your children time to play with the pets of friends and family. Take them to petting zoos. Allow them contact with other life forms that can give them joy at a time when they are likely experiencing stress and insecurity.

Here are six key benefits a pet provides for families coping with divorce:

**1. Unconditional Love:** It has been proven that pets are a source of support and unconditional love for children. During and after divorce, when there is so much instability in a child's life, a beloved pet can be the bridge to sanity. While much around them may be changing, sweet Fluffy is still there to love them and be by their side.



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**2. A confidant.** Children like to talk to their pets. They are a trusted friend who they can confide in and share their deepest fears with. This is truly a gift to children and greatly helps with emotional resiliency. Pets are nonjudgmental. They listen attentively. They “understand,” And they always love you back. Isn’t that what your children need at a time like this?

**3. Security.** Pets have been shown to help children better cope with challenging times within a family. They feel less alone and abandoned. The relationship with the pet provides a deep sense of security that can’t easily be duplicated. Kids rarely outgrow their bond with Fluffy, even when they mature into their teens.

**4. Bridge to adults.** Pets can bridge the emotional and communication gap between adults and children – especially when Mom and Dad are preoccupied with so many details during and after a divorce. They are a source of calm as the family moves through the storm of post-divorce transition.

**5. Stress Reduction.** Medical studies have shown that pets are just as beneficial for adults. Walking and talking to your dog or petting your cat can actually lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, not to mention overall stress. Pets also are a great source of joy, a reminder that there are other aspects of life that are still wonderful to experience.

**6. Best Friend.** Pets also provide unconditional love, nurturing and comfort to adults who greatly need it as they transition through the grief of divorce. They’re a best friend when you’re alone and an appreciative ear when you want to vent or shed tears.

Connecting to other life forms is a wonderful way remind us that other beings depend on us for love, sustenance and nurturing – even through a divorce!

*Rosalind Sedacca, CCT, is a Divorce & Parenting Coach and author of **How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook Guide to Preparing Your Children -- with Love!** For her free book on Post-Divorce Parenting: Success Strategies For Getting It Right!, her blog, coaching services and other valuable resources on divorce and parenting issues, please visit <http://www.childcenteredddivorce.com>.*