

## “Daddy, Can I Have A Puppy?”

(NAPSA)—Sooner or later, every parent is likely to hear: “Please, can I have a puppy?”

Rather than dodge the question, parents should consider whether their family is ready for a pet, says Sharon Bergen, senior vice president of education and training for Knowledge Learning Corporation, the nation’s leading provider of early childhood care and education.

Bergen suggests that parents weigh the pros and cons of adding a pet to the household before agreeing to a child’s request. “A pet can teach children responsibility and become a wonderful addition to a family—or it can be a burden,” she says. Bergen recommends families consider the following before deciding.

Who will care for the pet? Families should agree beforehand who will be responsible for feeding, walking, bathing and cleaning up after the pet.

Do you have space for a pet? Families living in apartments or townhouses may prefer a cat, a bird or fish, rather than a Labrador retriever. Check the library or Internet to learn more about different types and breeds of pets to determine the one most suit-



able for your family.

Owning a pet is time consuming and may be expensive. Family members should realize that they may have to give up other activities to properly care for a pet. If the prospect seems too daunting, parents may suggest waiting until the child is old enough to help care for an animal.

Bergen recommends the whole family meet the animal before deciding to take it home. Owning a pet is a long-term commitment, so think carefully before adopting a furry new family member.