

What is a Dog Daycare?

By Gail Gorrow

Dog Daycare simply put is a daycare center for dogs. It is similar to a child daycare center except it caters to dogs instead of children. Play time with other dogs, potty breaks, lunches, snacks, activity times and nap times (in crates) are all part of the daily routine. It is a great place to bring your dog during the week day, especially when you have an obligation to attend to that does not allow you to include your dog. It is a safe, fun, and stimulating social environment for your dog.

There is usually a ratio of ten dogs to one person in dog daycare centers. The people at the facility are there to supervise the dogs. The play groups are divided by the size of the dogs, play style of the dogs and personality of dogs. Most dog daycare facilities offer full time care and part time care. They also offer all day or half day. Full time is usually three to five days a week and part time is usually one to two days a week. All day is usually more than four hours a day and half days are four hours or less. The price of dog daycare varies on the area where the daycare is located, for example, a daycare in the city will be more expensive than in a rural community. Discounts are offered for dogs that come more than one day a week and multiple dogs from the same household. Some dog daycare centers offer pass plans for one, five, ten or twenty days, which means that you can buy five, ten or twenty days in advance at a discount price. With the pass plan you still need to make reservations, but you can use the card any time you want during the year and each time your dog attends, a date is stamped on the pass card. A pass plan is the best way to save money. Most dog daycare facilities do not offer discounts for half days.

In order for your dog to attend dog daycare, you must fill out an application for the center to approve. This process is done to ensure that everyone's dog is healthy and safe as possible. Some of the common rules or regulations are that the dog must be at least 12 weeks of age or older. All dogs seven months or older must be spayed or neutered. Owners must submit written proof of Distemper-Parvo, Rabies and Bordetella vaccinations. All dogs must have some kind of flea protection either oral or topical. All dogs must be in good health and have not been ill with a communicable condition within 10 days. All dogs must be non-aggressive and not be food or toy protective. Reservations are required, especially due to the ten dogs to one person ratio.

Most dogs will love dog daycare and do well, but some dogs would not enjoy being in that type of a setting. Dogs that would enjoy the daycare are usually under 2 years old, well socialized and enjoy playing with other dogs. The sporting breeds and dogs that know some basic commands are usually good candidates for daycare also. Some dogs that don't usually enjoy the daycare environment are dogs that do not do well with chaos, have high arousal tendencies, guard toys or food, and have severe separation anxiety. Some older dogs that don't want to play or be bothered by other dogs would not enjoy being there either.

Remember that you do not have to bring your dog to the daycare everyday to benefit from it. People that use dog daycare are not just people that work during the week. They are also people that take day trips here or there, are taking time to care for loved ones, or just don't want to leave their dog home alone for some reason. People that are staying at a pet friendly hotels, but are not allowed to leave their dog alone in the hotel room can also take advantage of the dog daycare. If your dog likes to play with

other dogs, but you don't have any dogs for him or her to play, the daycare is a great place to bring him or her for the day for some play time.

If you have any questions or would like more information on dog daycare, please contact me at 603-788-5588. Gail Gorrow is the treasurer of Mount Washington Kennel Club, Inc. and owner of Paws-a-tive Training.