

## Back to School Tips for Pets

While the kids are getting prepared to go back to school it's important not to forget about the family dog or cat. It's going to be a big change for the pet that is used to you being home all day. All of a sudden they are alone and might feel lonely or sad. This can lead to destructive behavior simply because you didn't prepare. Start preparing early and when school starts your pet is ready.



Your pet may experience the effects of the loss of the playtime and bonding they developed with the children by exhibiting signs of separation through destructive behaviors such as:

- Chewing on furniture and ripping pillows
- Shredding paper and other objects
- Obsessive barking, crying for long periods of time
- Housesoiling



Here are a few helpful hints for the kids to help them adjust:

- Avoid emotional hellos and good-byes. Instead, give them a lot of loving when you wake up. It might require getting up earlier and take him for a walk (for dogs). A quick "see ya" when you leave is what your pet needs to relax and wait for your return.
- Every once in a while, pretend you are leaving and don't. Pick up your bag, go out the door and then come back in. They will soon learn to relax when you leave.
- Leave behind an old t-shirt for them to cuddle up with.
- Leave things for your dog to do while you are gone. If he is busy with interactive toys. Dogs that have toys to play with tend to be less bored. Most destruction is a result of boredom.
- Go for a walk when you get home, it's quality time together and good exercise for both of you. Invite a friend, human or dog along for companionship.
- When doing your homework, read it to your pet, they love the attention.
- Groom them, brush him often and talk to him while you are brushing him.
- Include them in your games, soccer, basketball, etc. It's great exercise for both of you.

**Be sure to check with your veterinarian to have your dog fully evaluated and correctly diagnosed before trying to manage the symptoms. There may be an underlying medical condition that may be misconstrued as separation anxiety.**