

## Approaching and Communicating with Patients and Clients

### - Working with children

Many volunteers would like the opportunity to work with children; however, placements of this type are the hardest to find.

### Working With Children With Special Needs

- Are you able to work with children or young adults with learning difficulties or special needs? Do you have the skills to work with this group?
- Your PAT Dog or PAT Cat needs to be able to cope with this type of visiting where there may be higher noise levels, unpredictable or uninhibited behaviours or a more demanding play role.
- For the child's security (and yours), always make sure that you are supervised.
- Confidentiality is uppermost when working with children. Never discuss anything inappropriate about their treatment or illnesses.
- The only exception to this is where disclosure is required by law.
- Older children may have a different set of needs from the Pets As Therapy visit. They may want to play, groom or just cuddle your PAT Dog or PAT Cat.
- Children may share things with the animal which they are unable to say to an adult worker. If you do overhear something which you feel should be passed on to a caseworker or staff member, do so quietly and in confidence.

### Volunteering in Mainstream Schools

Pets As Therapy is often invited to attend school assemblies to explain the work that we do in the community. This is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate responsible pet ownership. School visiting is demanding with high noise levels, running pupils and crowding with lots of small hands wanting to touch and cuddle your PAT Dog or PAT Cat.

### READ 2 DOGS

The READ 2 DOGS programme helps benefit many school children who are reluctant readers. If you are interested in taking part in the READ 2 DOGS programme, please contact the Placement Officer, Dinah Baynton-Dibley Tel: 0208 589 9258 or email: [ddibley@petsastherapy.org](mailto:ddibley@petsastherapy.org)

## **Working With Phobic Children & Adults**

The Charity is working with psychologists on carefully managed programmes for the treatment of childhood phobia of dogs. This type of work must always be done under the guidance of a healthcare professional.

If you are interested in working with phobic children (or adults) and for a copy of our 'Working with Phobia' please contact the Placement Officer, Dinah Baynton-Dibley Tel: 0208 589 9258 or email: [ddibley@petsastherapy.org](mailto:ddibley@petsastherapy.org)

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