

HOW TO SURVIVE WHEN YOUR CHILD BRINGS HOME A STRAY

Dog

1 **Involve your child in finding the dog's owner.**

Explain that the dog might be somebody else's pet. Ask her to make posters to put up around the neighborhood. Call the local humane society to determine if the pet has been reported missing. Have her speak to the local mail carrier and other dog owners in the area who might recognize the dog.

2 **Check the dog's tags.**

A dog kept as a pet should have a rabies tag, and may have a name tag. Contact animal control authorities, who can use the rabies ID number to locate the animal's vet and owner.

3 **Follow the dog.**

Take the dog back to the place where it was found and encourage the dog to lead you and your child to its home. Put the dog on a leash. Repeat, "Go home, boy!" or "Dinner time!" to motivate the dog. If you live in an area where several languages are spoken, repeat these phrases in each language.

4 **Take the dog to a veterinarian.**

The vet should give the dog a full behavioral and medical evaluation. The dog's mental and physical condition may determine whether it can be a suitable pet.

5 **Discuss dog ownership responsibilities.**

Explain to the child that caring for a dog is hard work. Detail pet care duties, and create a contract to make sure your child is fully vested in caring for and loving your new dog.

Be Aware

A dog with a runny nose, badly matted hair, and a dirty or unkempt appearance may have been on the streets for weeks or longer—approach such a dog with caution. Be wary of a dog that drinks lots of water and seems confused, withdrawn, or aggressive. Never approach any dog that appears to be foaming at the mouth.

EXCHANGE STUDENT

1 **Involve your child in finding the student's origins.**

Explain to your child that the student may already have a host family. "Found" signs should be created and posted around the local high school, college, or university.

2 **Check the student's papers.**

An exchange student should have a valid passport and student visa, and usually a letter of introduction to the school. School authorities should be able to reach the student's parents to verify his status.

3 Follow the student.

Take the student back to the place where he was found and encourage him to lead you and your child to his host family. Repeat, “Take me to your host family,” or “Show me where you live.” If the student smiles and nods but does not follow your instructions, repeat these phrases in several languages until the student responds appropriately.

4 Take the student to a health clinic.

The doctor should give the student a full medical and behavioral evaluation.

5 Discuss moving-in responsibilities, and prepare for a long stay.

While exchange students are generally friendly once they feel comfortable in their new surroundings, they can overstay their welcomes. Give the student his own bedroom, if available, and access to soft drinks, a television, and a telephone. (Be prepared for expensive long-distance telephone calls.)

Be Aware

Observe the student’s condition and behavior. A student with a runny nose, badly matted hair, and a dirty or unkempt appearance may have been on the streets for weeks or longer—approach such a student with caution. Be wary of a student who drinks constantly and seems confused, withdrawn, or aggressive. Never approach any student who appears to be foaming at the mouth.

**WORST-CASE
SCENARIO.**