

Dear Mom & Dad,

I am a dog. This means that my intelligence and capacity for learning are the same as an 18-30 month old child.

I am a dog. I cannot always hold my bladder for longer than 10-12 hours. Sometimes I cannot 'feel' that I need to poop until it actually begins to come out. I cannot vocalize nor tell you that I need to go. Do not punish me if you have not let me out for 8 hours and I tinkle. It is your fault. As a dog, it is wise to remember that I probably **NEED** to go potty after eating, drinking, playing and sleeping. If you want me to sleep through the night, please don't give me water after 7 or 8pm. A crate will make it easier to teach me potty training and will avoid you being mad at me. I am a dog and accidents may happen so please be patient with me. In time, I will learn.

I am a dog. I like to play. I will run around and chase imaginary monsters, chase your feet and toes and 'attack' you, chase fuzzballs, other pets and small children. It is **Play**: it's what I do. Do not be mad at me or expect me to be mellow, sedate and sleep all day. My play is beneficial: use your wisdom to guide me in my play with appropriate toys and activities like chasing a rolling ball or gentle tug games or plenty of chew toys. If I nip you too hard, talk to me in 'dog talk' by giving a loud YELP! I will usually get the message as this how dogs communicate with one another. If I get too rough, simply ignore me for a few seconds or put me in a time out.

I am a dog. Hopefully you would not yell, hit, strike, kick or beat a 6 month old human infant so please don't do that to me. I am delicate and very impressionable. If you treat me harshly now, I will grow up learning to fear you and all humans. Instead, please guide me with encouragement and wisdom.

I am a dog. I am a creature with feelings and drives much like your own but also very different. Although I am NOT a human in a dog suit, neither am I a unfeeling robot who can instantly obey your every whim. I truly DO want to please you and be part of your family and your life. I hope you got me because you want a loving partner and companion, so do not relegate me to the backyard when I get bigger. Do not judge me harshly but instead mold me with gentleness and guidelines and training into the kind of family member you want me to be.

I am a dog. I am not perfect and I know you are not perfect either. I love you anyway. Please learn all you can about training, puppy behaviors and caring for me. Learn about my particular breed and its characteristics. It will give you insight and understanding into WHY I do the things I do. Please teach me with love and patience, show me the right way to behave and socialize me with training in an obedience class. We will BOTH have a lot of fun together.

I am a dog. I want more than anything to love you, to be with you and to try and please you. Won't you please take time to understand how I work? We are the same, you and I, in that we both feel hunger, pain, thirst, discomfort and fear but we are also very different and must work to understand each other's language, body signals, wants and needs. Someday I will be a well behaved dog, one you can be proud of and that you will love as much as I love you.

Love,

Your Dog