# Puppy Raising Self-Assessment Form

The following questions have been designed so that you can assess your suitability and readiness to become a valued Puppy Raiser. If you answer ‘no’ to any of these questions, it may suggest that your current situation does not support raising a pup. You may however be suited to another role such as Temporary Care, Home Whelping or Home Boarding that we would be happy to explore with you.

## Commitment of Time:

* Do you have adequate time each day to exercise and work on skills with the pup? This includes but is not limited to; daily walks, daily obedience sessions, and teaching good home manners.
* Do you have adequate time to attend (at minimum) fortnightly Group Training Sessions, one on one walks, and training and socialisation outings during weekday business hours?
* Do you have adequate time to commit to spending an ample portion of your day with the pup and not leave the pup unattended for more than 4 hours at a time (some exceptions apply) making it part of your life and normal routine?
* Are you prepared to housetrain the pup and teach good toileting habits?
* Do you have adequate time to socialize the pup in a variety of environments, at least 3-5 times a week? Socialisation experiences can be short (5-15 mins) and can be incorporated into everyday activities such as school pick-ups, sporting events, etc., whereby the pup can encounter various noises, floor surfaces, people, and animals.
* Do you agree to communicate with all GDN staff in a timely fashion? Please note, phone calls, text and email are our primary means of communicating with our Puppy Raisers. Access to a computer or smart phone is preferred but not mandatory.

## Safety of You and the Pup:

* Can you provide a safe, loving, and secure home environment for the pup?
* Labrador pups quickly grow into adult size dogs. Do you or does a committed family member have the ability to manage a dog weighing approximately 30kgs – 40kgs? This might include lifting the dog where required.
* Do you have the physical ability to perform a number of repetitive tasks when attending to the pup (from a small pup to a mature adult)? These tasks may involve lifting, twisting, stretching, bending, kneeling, and squatting.
* Is your fencing and yard secure, preventing the pup from escaping, and unwanted dogs from gaining access to the pup, especially when entire (not desexed) and during female heat cycles? Please not, dogs are generally desexed at around 12 months.
* Are you prepared to puppy-proof your property to ensure the safety of the pup? This includes, but is not limited to:
	+ The removal of all rat and snail baits, poisons, safe relocation of chemicals, cleaning products, and medicines, and moving electrical cords and other potential hazards.
	+ Remove or block access to any dangerous plants.
	+ Ensure fencing is secure around pools and elevated areas to prevent falls and risk of drowning.
* Do you have adequate outdoor shelter? Shelter should be connected to the home and the pup should be able to escape the elements comfortably should that be required. This may be a verandah or a dog door to the home.
* Are you prepared to keep the pup on leash, or in a secure fenced-off area whenever it is outdoors?
* Is everyone in the household committed to keeping the pup safe? For example, moving out of reach small objects that could pose a choking hazard such as children’s toys, and ensuring that gates and doors are secured and shut at all times?
* Are you prepared to maintain the pup’s health and well-being by following Veterinary direction, ensuring preventative medication is delivered in a timely manner, and Guide Dogs NSW/ACT advice adhered to?
* Are you prepared to health check and groom the pup on a regular basis as taught by your Puppy Development Advisor?
* Are you willing to pick up and appropriately discard of faeces daily? Faeces are generally collected via a toilet bag and thrown in the bin, or by using a pooper scooper and discarding in a designated bin which is then emptied weekly.
* Some dogs can be coprophagic (eat their own and other animals’ faeces). Are you willing to manage this behaviour should it occur by cleaning up after the dog immediately after toileting?
* Are you committed to using positive reinforcement training and handling methods?
* Will you do your utmost to ensure the pup’s safety whilst in your care, both at home and on outings where you may encounter a range of potential hazards such as cars and bikes?

## Expectations of the Household:

* Primary applicant is 18 years or older.
* Are all members of the household in agreement with raising a pup and adhering to the guidelines set out by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT to ensure consistent handling of the pup?
* Are all members of the household committed to maintaining optimal physical health of the pup including exercising restraint when feeding and treating (not overfeeding)? Please note, should a pup/dog become overweight and attempts for weight loss are not successful, Guide Dogs reserves the right to rehome the pup for weight loss on a temporary or permanent basis.
* Can you ensure that all people in the home are not allergic to, uncomfortable around, or scared of, dogs? During the Puppy Raising period, our small pups grow at a rapid rate to become large dogs!
* If other pets are present in the household, will they be comfortable with having a pup in the house? Are you willing to ensure that our criteria for house manners are followed, even though different rules may apply for your own pets?
* Are you willing to deal with toileting accidents should they occur? You will be taught how to toilet train your pup. During training pups can be prone to accidents. It is paramount that the pup is not scolded should this occur. Toileting will need to be cleaned as soon as found.
* Labradors shed hair. Are you willing to live with dog hair and the extra cleaning it requires to manage? This might include extra sweeping, vacuuming, and dusting. You will also notice dog hair on your clothes.
* Are you willing to live with dog slobber and other dog bodily functions?

## Focus on the Mission:

* Are you committed to raising the pup adhering to the methods and processes outlined by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, even if they differ from what you have previously used to raise your own pet dogs?
* Are you willing to be part of our Puppy Raising program, working closely as a team with your Puppy Development Advisor, and other staff at Guide Dogs NSW/ACT?
* Are you willing to become part of an amazing team whose goal is to raise and train gorgeous pups into confident adults who can go on to become a Breeding, Guide or Therapy Dog, and help our community.