

September is National Guide Dog Month



Photos courtesy of Paws Giving Independence

Responsibilities of a Guide Dog

A guide dog is paired with an individual who has a disability to assist them in their daily life. Tasks a guide dog may perform include:

- 🐾 **Alerting:** Communicating to the person that they are near an allergen, may enter cardiac or diabetic shock, and are displaying signs of fainting or seizing.
- 🐾 **Interrupting:** Helping the individual out of an anxiety/panic attack, a dissociative episode, flashback, or moment of self-harm.
- 🐾 **Mobility Aid:** Assisting the person by pressing accessibility buttons, helping with transfers, guiding, and pulling.
- 🐾 **Blocking:** Providing support by distancing the individual from their trigger.
- 🐾 **Seeking Help:** Finding the necessary help for the handler.
- 🐾 **Deep Pressure Therapy:** Being a point of contact by lying on the handler to provide warmth and comfort and reduce anxiety and a PTSD episode.

Service Dogs

Service dogs are trained to support an individual who has a disability by performing important tasks. Service dogs are obedient while serving their handler. Service dogs are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Emotional Support Dogs

Emotional support dogs provide therapeutic benefit and are protected under the Fair Housing Act.

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Photos courtesy of Paws Giving Independence



Illinois
State Board of
Education

Did You Know?
More than 25 working dogs currently serve in Illinois schools. They fall into one of the three categories listed below:



Photos courtesy of Paws Giving Independence



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The Do's & Don'ts of having a Working Dog in the classroom

Do ask questions. Teachers should encourage students to ask questions. Open dialogue can inspire thoughtful and educational conversations.

Do not pet a service animal without getting the handler's consent first. Some service dogs have a "release from work" command, allowing them to be petted in public.

Do follow a service dog who approaches you alone. Many service dogs are trained to bring you to their handler if the handler is in need of help.

Do not distract the dog. A service dog is a working dog and it is important to treat them as you would a colleague.

1. Service Dogs

Service dogs pass high-level training to support their handler in specialized ways. They work with one handler or handler team at home and school.

2. Facility Dogs

Facility dogs work with their handler to provide one-on-one attention with a child in a facility.

3. Therapy Dogs

Therapy dogs work with their handler to provide one-on-one attention and care to children at various organizations.

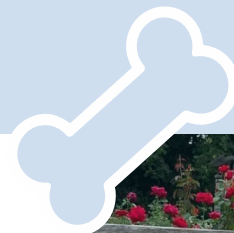


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Guide and therapy dogs in Illinois schools

- 🐾 **Bloomington Junior High School** received therapy dog Lambeau in 2017. He spends two to three days per week with students. **“By 3 p.m., he is exhausted and seems to have absorbed all the stress and anxiety from everyone met throughout the day,”** says social worker Michelle Rothwell.
- 🐾 **Broadmeadow Elementary in Rantou** received therapy dog Cooper, who helped calm students during a tornado warning in February 2023.
- 🐾 **Schramm Educational Center in Pekin** received therapy dog Captain, who provides comfort for shy children. Students read to the dog which helps them build confidence.
- 🐾 **Wallin Oaks Elementary in Plainfield** received therapy dog Charger in 2022.
- 🐾 **Oakland Elementary School in Bloomington** received therapy dog Mateo, who works directly with the school psychologist to help put stressed students at ease.
- 🐾 **Stevenson Elementary School in Bloomington** received therapy dog Milo in 2023.
- 🐾 **Washington Elementary in Bloomington** received therapy dog Livvy, whose presence has helped encourage attendance.



Captain at Schramm Educational Center in Pekin



Mateo at Oakland Elementary School in Bloomington



Livvy at Washington Elementary in Bloomington



Bloomington service dogs from left to right: Oakland Elementary School psychologist Cyndy Alvarez with her 3-year-old half Australian shepherd and half poodle, Mateo; Bloomington Junior High School social worker Michelle Rothwell with her 6-year-old golden retriever, Lambeau; Washington Elementary School volunteer handler Debbie Mattingly and her 2-year-old blue heeler and Australian shepherd mix, Livvy; and Stevenson Elementary School volunteer handler Wendy Smith with her 3-year-old golden doodle, Milo.