



Young readers are sometimes hesitant about their reading abilities. Did you know that children often feel at ease reading to animals? Pets are just there to listen- not to judge how well they are reading.

There are numerous benefits to reading to an animal:

- ✓ In a 2013 study that looked at the impact of therapy animals on youth literacy rates, students who worked with the dogs demonstrated levels of improvements with **net gains of more than a year's growth in reading rate, accuracy, fluency and comprehension** (Treat, 2013).
- ✓ When looking at the impact of reading to an animal in a population of homeschooled students, it was found that **reading to a dog significantly impacted student reading rates** (Smith, 2010).
- ✓ Kindergarten children who were a part of a dog reading group achieved **higher end-of-year reading scores** as compared to a control group that did not include a therapy dog (Kirnan, Siminerio, & Wong, 2016).
- ✓ A pilot study found that children were **better able to stay on-task** in their reading program when a therapy dog was involved (Bassette & Taber-Doughty, 2013).
- ✓ A literature review found that **reading to a dog may positively impact children's behavior**, thus contributing to the creation of a learning environment that fosters enhanced reading performance (Hall, Gee, & Mills, 2016).
- ✓ Reading aloud to a therapy dog team tended to **increase children's scores on a test of oral reading fluency** much more than reading aloud to peers (Levinson et al., 2017).

Tips on how to successfully read to your pet:

- Set up a comfortable spot for the reader and pet to sit. Make sure the reader will be able to show the pet pictures from the book.
- Pets can get distracted, so have a favorite pet toy on hand to keep the pet engaged if needed.
- Encourage your child to pause and pet your animal to keep them settled down and comfortable during the reading session.
- Reward the pet for their good listening behavior with a treat at the end of the reading session!

