If you’re a dog owner who works long hours or has an unpredictable schedule, leaving your dog home alone for long stretches can be challenging for both you and your dog. While some owners opt for hiring a local dog walker through apps like *Rover* and *Wag*, others will find that a dog daycare is the best choice for their dog. If your dog is well-socialized, enjoys the company of other dogs, and will benefit from frequent exercise, playtime, and lots of stimulation, a daycare environment may be a good option. Every dog’s needs are different and you’re in the best position to decide if this environment is right for your dog. Some of the benefits of doggy daycare include:  
  
**Socialization**  
Early enrollment can help puppies become well-adjusted pack members. Dogs who don't have enough socialization or exposure to other dogs and people can develop behavioral problems or fears.  
**Separation anxiety**  
Daycare can help relieve separation anxiety and boredom that can lead to destructive behavior when owners are away.  
**Routine**  
Dogs thrive on routine, and daycare provides a structured setting with trained staff who can prevent conflicts and address issues.  
**Safety**  
Daycare employees are responsible for the safety of the dogs and will remove them from potentially harmful situations.  
**Mental and physical stimulation**  
Daycare provides a fun, safe, and supervised environment for dogs to interact with other dogs and get exercise. This stimulation can help reduce boredom, anxiety, and frustration, which can lead to destructive behaviors.  
**Professional care**  
Daycare professionals can provide quality care and supervision, and monitor for any health issues.   
  
If you decide to enroll your dog, it’s important to visit facilities without your dog and simply observe. Examine the facility and watch how the staff interacts with the dogs in their care. Here are some things to look for:  
  
- Is it clean and organized?  
- Does it have secure fencing? Are there separate areas for differently sized dogs?   
-Is the area free of hazards, like electrical cords, wires, or broken toys?  
-Does it have minimal odors and a comfortable temperature?  
-Is there enough for staff to ensure safety? How do they interact with the dogs? Do they understand dog body language and communication?  
  
Questions to Ask Before Choosing a Doggy Daycare  
So far, so good? Then it’s time to ask some important questions. And don’t be shy — this is your dog’s care you’re deciding on. Any reputable daycare center will be happy to answer your questions.

### **Will They Do a Temperament Test?** The daycare facility should do an assessment of your dog’s behavior and personality before accepting them. Some facilities do a comprehensive behavioral assessment, not only to decide if a dog is right for their environment but also to customize care.

### **What Kind of Training Does the Staff Have?** At a bare minimum, the staff should be trained in basic care and safety procedures. However, ideally, you’re looking for staff trained in animal behavior, including canine body language, and warning signs of danger, stress, or illness.

### **Does the Facility Have Procedures in Place for Emergencies?** There should be staff members trained in canine first aid. Ask how they’ll communicate with you in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster.

### **What Communication Will You Recieve From Staff?** Some facilities provide daily or weekly reports on your dog’s behavior, while others will give owners access to a livestream, so they can see what their dog is up to during the day. It’s important to ensure that any potential doggy daycare has plans in place to notify you promptly if they see a change in your dog’s behavior or well-being.

### **What Activities Do They Offer?** There will likely be dogs of many different energy levels and personalities at any doggy daycare. Whether it’s providing toys or structured play time, it’s important that staff plan a variety of activities to appeal to different types of dogs. Daycare facilities should also provide a comfortable, designated rest area for dogs in their care. Also, ask if your dog will be crated at any point, and for how long?

### Getting used to daycare It can take a few days to weeks or months for your dog to get used to daycare. Be patient and look for signs of distress, and provide lots of love and care when your dog gets home.

## Does Your Dog Like Doggy Daycare? Once your dog has settled into the routine, you’ll be able to tell whether they’re enjoying daycare. The best sign is a dog that comes home tired, but happy. Are they relaxed or stressed at the end of the day? Do they seem eager to head out each morning or do you have to drag them through the door? You know your dog best and are most qualified to assess their health and happiness. And, when it all works out well, you can go off to work guilt-free, knowing that each day is like a vacation for your dog.