

Want a pet but can't have a dog?

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(HealthDay)—Want a family pet, but can't have a dog? There are plenty of other great pet options.

A first choice for many families is a cat. As with dogs, there are different breeds and personalities as well as grooming needs, such as with long-haired cats.

Generally, a mellow cat is a good choice if you have [young kids](#).

Since kittens are fragile, consider adopting an adult cat if you have a baby or toddler. Getting an adult cat lets you pick one with specific qualities that aren't evident in a kitten.

Gerbils and [guinea pigs](#) can make great pets for families with older kids. Since hamsters tend to nip, they're not a good [choice](#) if you have little ones.

If you're considering fish, cold-water fish like goldfish are the easiest to care for because they don't need a heated tank. But if you have the time and budget, tropical [fish](#) can be fascinating.

Birds make cheerful pets. The most popular bird pets are budgies. They're smart, love their families, and can often be taught to speak.

The playful ferret is a popular pet, but isn't legal in some areas, so check first.

Besides being a lot of fun, a pet teaches kids about caring, and from that they can learn about treating people with care, too.

Keep in mind that there are some kid-friendly rules that apply no matter what pet you choose, according to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.

Children under age 4 need to be supervised when with a pet. Children should be 10 or older before given care responsibilities for a large pet,

such as a cat—but you should still supervise them.

Be sure to explain that, like people, a pet needs food and water, exercise and love.

More information: To understand what care is involved with having a cat, check out tips from the [ASPCA](#).

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